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AN EXTRAORDINARY PRODUCER
AND FRIEND





LOOK FOR THE ANNUAL REALSCREEN AWARDS SPECIAL SECTION IN THE CENTER OF THIS ISSUE.

"Sometimes that which you don't have is a blessing rather than a curse." 48



Alma Har'el blurs the lines between non-fiction and narrative in her upcoming LoveTrue.



# on the cover

FYI's Arranged is one of many reality series with a romantic bent gracing the networks now.

Kirby Dick's latest doc, The Hunting Ground, explores cover-ups of sexual assaults on U.S. university and college campuses.

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# reciscreen London

oin us for the **London Marriott Hotel** second edition of Realscreen London. The event is designed to strengthen partnerships between British and international producers, along with global buyers and distributors, through a mix of panels, structured networking opportunities and social events, and will replicate the experience of the market-leading events, Realscreen Summit and Realscreen West

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# "IDOL" **CHATTER**

I write this, the grand finale of American Idol's 14th season has iust wrapped, crowning one Nick Fradiani as the winner. But as the confetti fell and credits rolled, one couldn't help but feel that the whole affair was somewhat anti-climactic. After all, only two days before the finale, Fox announced that the venerable singing competition's 15th season next year would be its last.

That news created a wave of reactions from punters and pundits alike, with former *Idol* winners, judges and peripheral talent weighing in. William Hung, who enjoyed 15 minutes of fame after an infamous mutilation of Ricky Martin's "She Bangs" during an audition episode in season three, lamented the loss. (I'm personally hoping that the series will end with Hung performing "My Way," but it's a long shot.) Even Brian Dunkleman, who served as cohost with Ryan Seacrest for one season, got in on the act, tweeting, "I knew American Idol would never last without me."

Sure, most media coverage trumpeted the fact that the show wasn't the ratings juggernaut it once was. This past season saw viewership hovering near the 10 million mark, a far cry from its 2006 peak average of 30 million-plus. Post-Simon Cowell, its revolving door of judges wasn't doing it any favors, and many critics took jabs at the inconsistencies of Idol's star-making machinery, saying that the emergence of bona fide idols such as Kelly Clarkson and Carrie Underwood through the show's history was the exception rather than the rule. When Coke pulled their cups (and sponsorship dollars) off the table in 2014, it foreshadowed the end of the ride. And for God's sake, don't get Dave Grohl started.

Still, when it came to propelling winners into viable careers, *Idol*'s batting average has been better than that of the competitors it has spawned. And even a massive hit can only remain at peak performance for so long. At some point it will probably jump the shark, or fall prey to the fickle whims of fashion and viewing trends. Consider that in 2002, YouTube was three years away from launching, and digital distractions for the target demographic of a show such as Idol were practically non-existent. Today, aspiring singing sensations upload Katy Perry cover versions to the mighty 'Tube, in the hopes of becoming the next Justin Bieber, to be plucked out of the ether and vaulted into the stratosphere.

Fans of the series - of which there were millions - will mourn the loss of a favorite show for a spell, and move on. For television executives, however, the mourning might have an added dimension. As Mike Darnell, the former Fox alternative TV exec who oversaw *Idol* in its explosive heyday, told the Los Angeles Times, "It feels like the end of an era... I don't honestly believe anything will ever approach the numbers it was getting at its peak."

As Lou Reed might have said, "Those were different times."

Corrections: In our Global 100 report, featured in our March/April 2015 issue, we incorrectly named Leftfield Entertainment in our listing as the producer of Pawn Stars and several other non-fiction series. Leftfield Pictures, a subsidiary of Leftfield Entertainment, is the production company behind those series. Also, in our MIPTV Picks, the program The Mafia with Trevor McDonald was incorrectly named as Trevor McDonald Meets the Mafia. Realscreen regrets the errors.



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# Wild, wild west

I write this the team is putting the finishing touches on the prep for our seventh (can you believe that?) edition of Realscreen West and the sixth Realscreen Awards show.

It really doesn't seem that long ago since we decided to take the Realscreen roadshow westward to the Sheraton Delfina in Santa Monica. We were pretty pleased with our attendance in that first year - 236 delegates from the U.S., Canada and the U.K. for our day-and-a-half program. Fast forward to June 2015, when we'll be welcoming close to 1,200 people from 16 countries to our expanded three-day program. The lovely setting of the Fairmont Miramar, an incredibly strong line-up of speakers and sessions and an array of meaningful networking opportunities will make for a tremendously productive market.

Looking to replicate that success at Realscreen London, we've taken the upcoming second edition to tony Mayfair and will be hosting the conference at the London Marriott Hotel Grosvenor Square on September 30 and October 1. This five-star hotel offers great meeting space, contemporary accommodations and two Gordon Ramsay restaurants. You may even see him there – I did on a venue tour in January. Please see our spread on pages 4 and 5 to meet our Realscreen London advisory board.

Finally, please make sure you note the dates for the 2016 edition of the Realscreen Summit in your calendars. We move to the shiny new Marriott Marquis Washington, D.C. from Sunday, January 31 to Wednesday, February 3.

'Til next time, go well. Claire Macdonald VP & Publisher realscreen

# **UPCOMING ADVERTISING** & SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

Editorial features: This issue will feature our Formats Report, as well as our MIPCOM Picks and our annual Wild Guide.

## **Bonus distribution**

Realscreen London, MIPCOM and New York Film & Television Festival

### **Booking deadline**

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For information on any of these opportunities or to discuss something custom that we can do for you, call realscreen sales at 14164082300 and ask for Melissa Giddens at x228, Kerry Lanctot at x277 or Chris Vin at x483.



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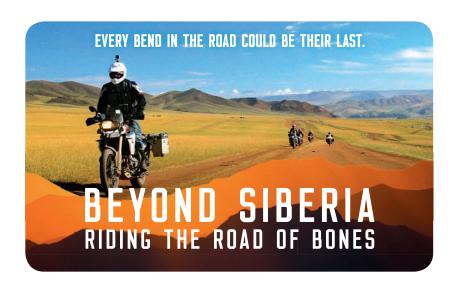
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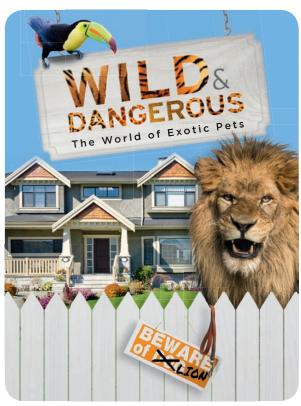


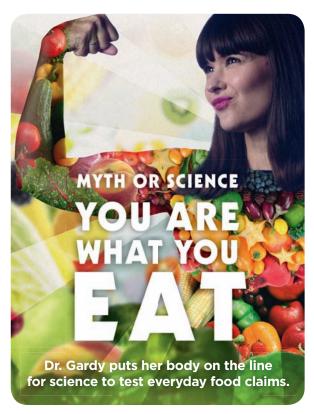
# **BRINGING YOU THE BEST DOCUMENTARIES**















BY KEVIN RITCHIE

David Lyle, president of Pact U.S., says the newly formed producers' trade body is putting American interests and issues first.

# **MAKING A PACT** WITH AMERICA

"This isn't a

gathering of

disgruntled

people who

want to group

together to

complain."

hen the U.S. outpost of the British indie producers' trade body Pact launched at the Realscreen Summit in January, its stated aims were to represent the commercial interests of American producers as well as UK prodcos working Stateside.

Now that Pact U.S. has found its inaugural president, he has a message for American producers.

"This will be an American group, run by American members for American interests," says David Lyle, who most recently served as the CEO of National Geographic Channels. "We have had a perception problem from day one because of the successful British nature of Pact. While its fundamentals, asset base, experience and expertise has been honed in Europe, what I'm about is using that experience, but making it American."

Pact U.S.'s Los Angeles office will open by June and represent indie producers working in all genres, including unscripted, and across linear TV and digital platforms.

As Lyle sets out to rally a U.S. membership, he is thinking that prime areas to explore include helping producers move efficiently between broadcast and digital windows, as well as the packaging of talent and ensuring content is marketed properly.

"I've got a bee in my bonnet about that," he says about the latter. "Marketing or

making people aware of your stuff is going to become as important as the production of your stuff, if you will.

"To some extent social media plays a part in that marketing but it's increasingly part of content production itself."

Thus, he intends to introduce American producers to the integral roles talent can play in producing and packaging shows, especially when it comes to multi-channel networks (MCNs).

Pact U.S. will also provide members with "behind the tent" intel and resources regarding best practices in production and

employment, access to pro-bono legal and business advice, and will act as an industry voice when discussing such issues as tax rebate schemes with state legislators, for example.

When it comes to retaining intellectual property rights, Lyle hopes Pact U.S. can help producers when rights to a show are left sitting unexploited.

"I don't for a minute think that we're about to launch the Terms of Trade in the United States that exist in the United Kingdom," he says. "My greatest frustration as both an ex-producer and as an ex-cable operator, are rights that are gobbled up and not exploited at all. More or less, that has dissipated, but I wouldn't say it's vanished. There are still cases where rights can be

> locked up but not exploited by anyone."

A day after launching the Pact U.S. site in May, half a dozen producers had already reached out. In a year's time, he hopes membership will be helping to focus and re-shape the organization's aims to better reflect its point of view.

"I want to make it clear to the buying community that this isn't a gathering of antagonistic or disgruntled

people who want to group together to complain," he maintains. "What we want to do is group together producers so they're more efficient and so they can find better ways to sell to buyers.

"Better practices are going to be better for everyone: buyers and sellers, producers and broadcast companies."

# Greenlit & Gone

A look at what's on the way from assorted networks, and what's on the way out.

### Declassified

Produced by: All3Media

America Network: CNN

### Made in Chelsea: Beverly Hills

Produced by: Monkey

Network: E4

### **Women in Prison**

Produced by: Raw TV Network: Investigation

Discovery



### American Idol

Produced by: 19 Entertainment, FremantleMedia North America

Network: Fox

### **Neighbors with Benefits**

Produced by: Haymaker TV

Network: A&E

### The Taste

Produced by: Kinetic Content

Network: ABC



the consolidation of indie production companies continues apace, there is one game-changing

consequence that has slipped under the radar.

Some seriously talented people are now coming back onto the job market. They might be creative leaders who have built and then sold their own companies. Having been locked in by their new owners for two to five years, they can now legally remove their shackles. On the other hand, they might be talent at the next level – the key show-runners and work-getters who yearn for pastures new.

This talent rush will re-energize independent production, at a time when many fear consolidation is killing creativity.

What is it about consolidation that makes production talent restless? Is it that feeling of being a smaller cog in a much bigger production empire? Is it the loss of the familiar work culture that was enjoyed pre-purchase?

As consolidators continue to bolt together bigger chunks of the indie world, production talent faces being grouped by genre rather than company, thus further losing their identity. They may be asked to explore unfamiliar genres. And, of course, there's the constant pressure to hit the year's financial targets.

More often than not, once the honeymoon period has worn off, creative hearts and minds start to wander beyond the confines of the swish new corporate offices.

But this may be too negative a perspective. I think there is a more powerful and positive gravitational force at work – that irrepressible instinct of creative metamorphosis.

Most people who thrive in this business do so because they love their jobs. They need to keep raising the creative bar, pushing themselves and their teams. If they feel frustrated or unfulfilled, they get itchy feet. Also, it seems that for most creative heads, despite receiving substantial

sums from selling their companies, money does not extinguish the creative flame.

Lots of big names have publicly announced their move to the departure lounge in the past few months and I believe plenty more are about to join them.

This is not the place to speculate about who they may be. It's unfair to the individuals and their employers. And if they do leave, who knows what really happened? While the indie rumor mill will be rife with speculation, truth is often the first casualty in the delicately constructed press releases announcing the separations.

So the big question for those who have made the great escape is: what do you do next? Start all over again, join something already established or do something different?

Most of the escapees are in an incredibly strong position, although it does not always feel that way. Their mix of business and creative savvy, their contacts and their award-winning, hit-making track records indicate there will be opportunities aplenty. Also, there is no shortage of suitors with deep pockets and big ambitions, looking to incubate new companies.

Having been through all this, if you feel like starting again, here are two bits of free advice. Take your time, there's no rush. There is a feeling that you've got to make a move quickly. Don't. Take the summer off and then survey the field before you take the plunge. And secondly, if you are offered funds to set up your new company, take as little as possible – and you probably need less than you think. There's no such thing as free money.

Summing up, in the months ahead expect some new powerhouse companies to emerge, shaking up the existing pecking order and injecting a major dose of creative adrenaline.

John Smithson is creative director of Arrow Media, an indie he co-founded in 2011. Previously he was chief executive at Darlow Smithson Productions.





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# CHANGING OF THE GUARD AT 'FRONTLINE'

he founding executive producer of PBS's investigative documentary strand 'Frontline' is stepping down after 33 seasons.



David Fanning, who has worked as exec producer

since founding the series in 1983, will return to making documentaries and developing film projects, but remains with 'Frontline' and producer WGBH as executive producer at large.

He will be succeeded by Raney Aronson (pictured), who joined the show in 2001 and has been transitioning into the role over the past three years. She will officially take the reins on June 1.

"It's been an extraordinary privilege to have led 'Frontline' for more than three decades," Fanning said in a statement. "I have had one of the best jobs in journalism, and been able to work with so many talented and smart people. They have made 'Frontline' what it is, and I have had great joy in helping them make that happen. I have deep confidence that Raney Aronson will carry on this work with distinction."

Aronson joined the series as a producer and has risen through the ranks, most recently becoming deputy executive producer in 2012. Since then, she has led the show's editorial vision together with Fanning and established a collaborative model to develop and manage 30 cross-platform journalism partnerships with news outlets such as *The New York Times*, CBC, Univision and ProPublica.

Prior to joining 'Frontline,' she worked for ABC News, *The Wall Street Journal* and MSNBC.

"David Fanning has established 'Frontline' as the high bar in journalism, the standard by which serious, in-depth reporting is measured," said WGBH president Jonathan Abbott in a statement. "We are grateful not only for his decades of committed editorial leadership, but also his dedicated and thoughtful planning for a transition to a strong future."

"David Fanning's mentorship and partnership over the past fifteen years has been extraordinary," added Aronson. **KR** 



# **BEST PRACTICES:**THE IMPORTANCE OF GRATITUDE

BY CHRIS PALMER AND SHANNON LAWRENCE

the modern world, we often overlook the importance of gratitude. Gratitude may seem obvious to some, and peripheral to others. Practicing it, however, has effects that reverberate throughout our personal and professional spheres of life.

There are many simple things we can be grateful for, such as the beauty of nature and the love of our families. If we don't pause and reflect on the opportunities and fortunes that we have available to us, we will take them for granted.

Gratitude is one of the most important virtues in the workplace. Consider these five reasons: **Gratefulness is contagious.** When you are grateful, it encourages others around you to adopt that same positive perspective. Positivity attracts more positivity. **Gratitude is like "personal fuel."** Gratitude

in daily life can help you to improve your professional efficiency. Gratitude prevents you from negative thoughts, or being hindered by what you don't have. Negativity is draining; it obstructs productivity. Gratitude motivates you and keeps you focused on what you do have.

Gratitude enhances empathy. Gratitude implies that we recognize and appreciate the effort of others. When we say "thank

you" or recognize our colleagues, we are identifying with them on a personal level. Gratitude expressed in this way can improve team morale and awareness of the effort that employees take to complete their tasks.

Gratitude reduces stress. As professionals,

**Gratitude reduces stress.** As professionals, we are subject to daily sources of stress. High stress levels can contribute to a negative work atmosphere, and adverse health effects such as high blood pressure and heart problems. In a piece for the *Huffington Post*, author and meQuilibrium CEO Jan Bruce cites that the regular practice of gratitude can help to reduce stress levels.

**Gratitude improves leadership.** When we express gratitude to our colleagues, we are strengthening respect and collaboration between employees. According to an

article in Forbes, author David Horsager writes that "we're drawn to those who acknowledge our contributions." Gratitude enhances professional leadership by helping individuals to garner more respect and effort from their employees.

Recognizing the benefit of gratitude is one thing, practicing it is another. For people unaccustomed to the regular practice of gratitude, the behavior may seem foreign or forced. Here are four tips on how to actively practice gratitude to help you get started.

Say "thank you" more frequently. This is the most obvious way to practice gratitude, but it has impact. Everyone receives "thank you" as a positive gesture. This is a great way to increase personal positivity as well as spread positivity to others.

Change your state of mind. Gratitude requires a positive outlook. Try to view daily life through a positive lens. By focusing on the good in life, it is easy to find reasons to be thankful.

Take things one step at a time. The fast pace of life can leave us feeling overstimulated and overwhelmed. Remember to take moments to pause and reflect. It's in these moments that we discover our reasons to be grateful.

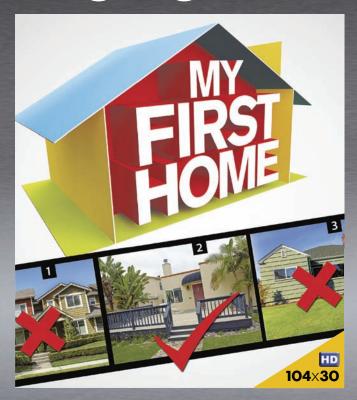
Make gratitude a daily ritual. Before you go to bed, write down a few reasons why you are grateful in a notebook. These reasons to feel grateful can serve as inspiration on hard days.

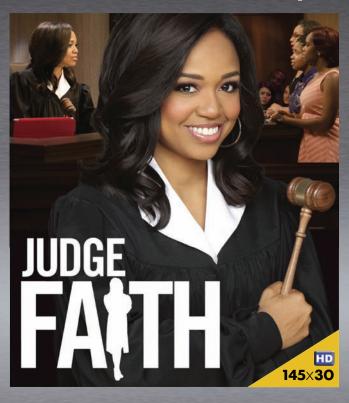
Start incorporating this regular practice into your own life to improve your career, alleviate work-related stress, and appreciate the joys in your life.

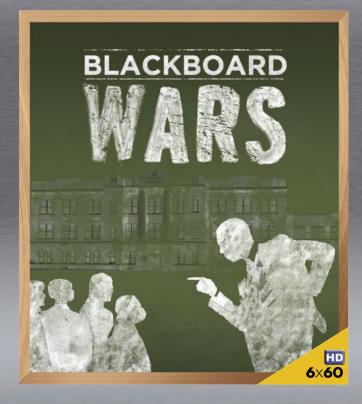
Professor Chris Palmer is the director of American University's Center for Environmental Filmmaking and author of the newly published book Confessions of a Wildlife Filmmaker: The Challenges of Staying Honest in an Industry Where Ratings Are King. Shannon Lawrence is a filmmaker and MFA candidate at American University.

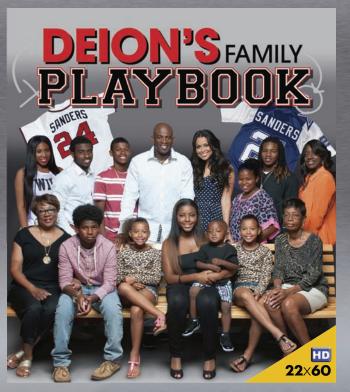


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# **ON THE SLATE**

Survivalists, spies, singers, romantically challenged couples – all these and more are represented in the 2015/2016 slates of American cable nets.

Realscreen provides an overview of what's on the way for unscripted in the U.S.

# A+E NETWORKS

A+E Networks' programming announcements for its upfront in late April boasted big events in the scripted space, with two scripted miniseries that will each be simulcast across three of its nets, but also showcased several unscripted projects for both linear and digital.

Flagship network A&E announced the weight loss series Fit 2 Fat 2 Fit, which sees 10 personal trainers change their diets and eat what the average overweight American eats, and refrain from working out for four months. Then, each trainer will work with an overweight partner to drop the weight.

History moves into the social experiment and survival spaces with *Alone* from Leftfield Pictures, which sends 10 survivalists into the wilderness of Vancouver Island with only what they can fit into a backpack, but no camera crews, teams or producers. The series will air as a "global TV event" across 200 territories.

The network is also rolling out a digital game show, *Shotgun*, in which contestants try to answer questions while riding "shotgun" in a race car doing laps at top speed. History says the series will be produced as "shareable digital shorts."

Lifetime, meanwhile, is trotting out *Sing It!* (w/t), which follows two rival a cappella groups from New Jersey as they are given the opportunity to study with "the world's best coaches" and face each other in weekly competitions. Studio Lambert Associates and All3Media America produce in association with InsomniaTV.

FYI's upcoming unscripted offerings will include What the Fung?, starring foodie brothers and comedic duo Andrew and David Fung; Married at First Sight: The First Year; and Food Porn from Loud TV and exec producer Bethenny Frankel, which showcases the people behind some of the most tantalizing food snaps on Instagram and other social media platforms, and the chefs behind the dishes.

Also on tap: *Tiny House: The First 24*, a digital companion series to the hit *Tiny House Nation* that will follow couples during the first 24 hours in their new, small living spaces.

On the slate for A+E's nets: Survival and social experiments for History, a cappella singing for Lifetime, and food porn for FYI.

Perhaps the biggest projects touted in the upfront come from the scripted department, with the news that A+E Studios is teaming with The Wolper Organization for a new version of the iconic miniseries *Roots*, to air across History, A&E and Lifetime; and the unveiling of a miniseries adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, produced in partnership with The Weinstein Company, BBC Cymru Wales and BBC Worldwide/Lookout Point, and also set to air across those three nets. Both are slated for 2016.

Meanwhile, as of press time, confirmation of the rebranding of History sister network H2 into a new channel from Vice Media remains unconfirmed officially by A+E or Vice, but the CEO and cofounder of the edgy, millennial-courting multimedia company was spotted at the A+E upfront presentation. According to reports, discussions with cable and satellite providers for carriage are close to complete. **Barry Walsh** 

### IDEAS & EXECUTION



Renegade83's 100 Miles From Nowhere gives its stars GoPros to film the action.

# ANIMAL PLANET

The Discovery Communications net kicked off its upfront presentation in March with a sizzle of the previously announced series 100 Miles from Nowhere, which Marjorie Kaplan – group president for Animal Planet, TLC and Velocity – said was not a "survival series but a 'thrival' series." Among Animal Planet's new series is the Red Rock Films and Triosphere Productions-made Sheriff of Cross River – the latest offering in the net's "muscular conservation" genre – which follows Nigerian conservation activist Peter Jenkins, who works to

Elsewhere, the Loud TV-produced Restoration Wild follows Jay Chaikin and his crew of builders as they identify and repurpose abandoned vintage structures and relics such as buses and cabins. Meanwhile, NHNZ Ltd.'s two-hour special Living with Maneaters explores the "delicate balance" among humans and wild animals in India.

ward off poachers and other threats

to the species of Cross River.

In the Ardaban-produced America Builds a Shelter – which the net bills as "Extreme Home Makeover but with an Animal Planet twist" – teams find and renovate animal shelters across the United States.

Additional series on the way at the net include the High Noon Entertainment-produced *Last North*, which follows explorers Eric Larsen and Ryan Waters as they traverse the Arctic Ocean from Northern Ellesmere Island to the geographic North Pole, as well as Watson Pond Productions' Fish or Die (working title), which tags along with four "diehard" angler fishermen who travel the world in a vegetable-oil-powered pick-up truck.

Also to debut is Icon Films' Bigfoot Found (w/t), on mountaineer Reinhold Messner and British scientist Mark Evans' journey from the Italian Alps to the Himalayas; JV Productions' Curse of the Frozen Gold, on the legendary Lost Creek Mine; World Media Rights' Animal Black Ops (w/t), which follows the Office of Law Enforcement and its 250 special agents who investigate wildlife crimes; and Engel Entertainment's Lone Star Law, about the 500 agents of Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Other series and specials include BBC Sales Company and JVP's Lands of the Monsoon (w/t), Warehouse 51 Productions' Wild Costa Rica, NHNZ Ltd.'s Wild Idea (w/t), Plimsoll Productions' Predator and Bait (w/t), BBC Worldwide America's Patagonia: Edge of Earth (w/t), and Matador Content's Alaska Proof (w/t). Manori Rayindran

# **BRAVO**

NBCUniversal cable net Bravo's 10 new series, unveiled in March during its upfront, include a *Real Housewives of Atlanta* spin-off.

True Entertainment has two new series on the Bravo slate: Mother Funders follows women who run Locust Grove, Georgia's parent-teacher organization with executive flair; while NeNe and Kim: The Road to Riches (w/t) follows NeNe Leakes and Kim Zolciack Biermann, two of the stars from Real Housewives of Atlanta, as they embark upon a cross-country road trip.

Also among the new series are two from FremantleMedia North America: Married to Medicine – Houston, the latest in the Married to Medicine franchise (developed by Purveyors of Pop); and My Fab 40th, which captures the action at extravagant 40th birthday parties.

Lime Pictures and All3Media America are behind *Fit Club*, following assorted New York City personal fitness trainers.

Toronto-based Tricon Films and Television and Bravo will coproduce Aprés Ski, following the exploits of a luxury concierge company working in ski haven Whistler, British Columbia.

Embassy Row will produce *Recipe for Deception*, a cooking competition in which contestants prepare dishes while unaware of what their mystery main ingredient is.

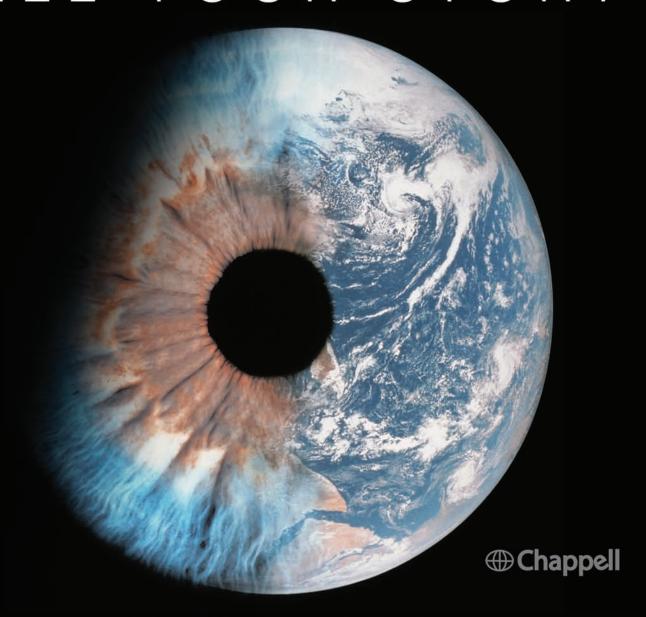
The *Below Deck* franchise from 51 Minds gets a spin-off and a new European locale via *Below Deck Mediterranean*, and Monkey Kingdom is behind another travel-themed series, *Tour Group* (w/t). Goodbye Pictures, meanwhile, presents *Ladies of Dallas* (w/t).

Returning series include Ladies of London (season two), Don't be Tardy... (season four), Million Dollar Listing Los Angeles (season eight) and Manzo'd With Children (season two). **BW** 



NeNe and Kim. (Pic: Ilya Savenok, NBCUniversal Cable Entertainment)

# FIRSTCOM MUSIC TELL YOUR STORY



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# 

A reality series starring country singer Kellie Pickler, a documentary about NASCAR and a nightly talk show are among the offerings on U.S. cable net CMT's 2015/2016 slate.

American Idol and Dancing With the Stars alum Pickler will star in I Love Kellie Pickler (working title), a series about the country singer's marriage to songwriter Kyle Jacobs. The show is being produced by Ryan Seacrest Productions and will debut in September.

Other new non-fiction titles for CMT are the Wheels Off Entertainment-produced *Gainesville*, a coming-of-age docuseries about a group of friends growing up in small-town Florida; the DiGa Vision-produced *The Ed Bassmaster Show*, which stars the YouTube comedian and prankster; and *American Speed: The True Story of NASCAR*, a Stephen David Entertainment-produced limited documentary series narrated by Dale Earnhardt Jr.

The network has also greenlit a talk show from Free90 Media and executive producer Chelsea Handler. *The Josh Wolf Show* will air nightly from Wednesday to Saturday beginning on June 11 and feature panel discussions, interviews and sketches. 495 Productions is producing *Pontoon Payday*, a boat-based game show, which premiered in May.

Series set to return this spring or summer include *Party Down* South and *Party Down South 2*, both from 495 Productions, and the 51 Minds Entertainment-produced *Steve Austin's Broken Skull Challenge*. **Kevin Ritchie** 

020

# 

U.S. broadcaster CNN has enlisted House of Cards actor Kevin Spacey for a six-part docuseries.

Titled Race for the White House, the series – which is part of CNN's Original Series slate for 2016 – will be exec produced by Spacey and producing partner Dana Brunetti and co-produced by the team's prodco Trigger Street Productions and Gold Rush prodco Raw TV.

According to CNN, each Spaceynarrated episode is to explore the story of a single campaign, and will feature previously unseen archival footage as well as interviews with "key players and dramatic recreations."

"When we created the CNN Original Series brand, this is exactly the type of programming we had in mind and Race for the White House will be the perfect complement to our coverage of the 2016 campaigns and election," said CNN topper Jeff Zucker in a statement.

The broadcaster has also ordered a

On CNN's slate: endurance worship, U.S. subcultures, and Kevin Spacey's Race for the White House.

"spiritual adventure" series tentatively titled *Believer* and hosted by author and religious studies scholar Reza Aslan. Produced by Whalerock Industries, the show is to feature Aslan engaging in endurance worship, rituals and various rites of passage in order to learn about "rarefied worlds that have been molded"



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Morgan Spurlock Inside Man will return for another season in 2016. by faith and tradition."

A third commission for CNN Original Series is the docuseries *United Shades of America*, featuring comedian W. Kamau Bell. The Objective Productions-made show will feature Bell exploring U.S. subcultures. According to a release from the broadcaster, "The series will strive to show the United States is not built upon just one, but many diverse and colorful definitions of America."

Elsewhere, CNN is to premiere five documentaries in

2016, including Alex Gibney's Steve Jobs: The Man in the Machine; Janet Tobias' Unseen Enemy, on the deadly pathogens that could create the next global pandemic, set for theatrical release this fall; and Marah Strauch's Sunshine Superman, on BASE jumping pioneer Carl Boenish, which hit theaters in May.

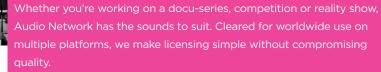
Remaining docs include an as-yet-untitled project by Jenny Carchman on the rise and fall of self-help personality James Arthur Ray, and an untitled project by Lydia Tengalia on chef Jeremiah Tower, who has founded such restaurants as San Francisco's Stars and New York's Tavern on the Green. The film is to be released in 2016. Each documentary is a copro with CNN Films and is expected to debut in theaters prior to broadcasting on CNN.

Finally, the network will this summer bring back series The Hunt with John Walsh (ZeroPointZero Production) and Death Row Stories (Jigsaw/Sundance Productions) as well as This is Life with Lisa Ling (part2 Pictures), Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown (ZeroPointZero Production) and Mike Rowe's Somebody's Gotta Do It (Pilgrim Studios).

Among the shows returning to CNN in 2016 are Bourdain's series - which has been picked up for an additional two cycles next year – and new seasons of *Morgan Spurlock Inside Man*, as well as the Mike Rowe and John Walsh series. **MR** 







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# DISCOVERY CHANNEL

Discovery Communications is taking significant strides in drawing female viewers as well as venturing into doc and scripted territories, with a documentary-fuelled "Elevation Weekend" set for Discovery Channel as well as further scripted offerings.

"We recognize what a huge potential scripted can [have] for us," Rich Ross, president of Discovery Channel, told a group assembled in Manhattan's Time Warner Center during its March upfront presentation. "That's why we're increasing our investment in scripted television."

Ross revealed the series Harley-Davidson – the "real life story" behind the iconic brand – to be the net's next scripted foray, which he described as "a scripted project that will resonate nationally and globally with universal themes of teamwork and real drive."

David Zaslav, president and CEO of Discovery Communications, later told the room that scripted is an "important part of the recipe" at Discovery, but added that the company will be using a "global lens" when it comes to selecting projects.

"Scripted is quite expensive," said Zaslav. "We'll look to do it in a global way. If we make it so it can work almost anywhere in the world, then it's a home run for us."

In addition to the previously announced acquisition of *The Cove* director Louie Psihoyos' documentary *Racing Extinction*, the net also unveiled its "Elevation Weekend" – a weekend of mountain climbing-themed programming that will feature the Sender Films and Big Up Productions-

made doc *Valley Uprising*, on the evolution of rock climbing in California's Yosemite Valley.

Slated to air later this year, the special programming event marks the net's concerted push into documentary, and will feature a number of films and series that explore the conflicts and obstacles inherent to mountain climbing as well as the histories of expeditions that have informed modern explorations.

Ross pointed out that his first commission as president is the MAK Pictures-produced *Treasure Quest*, which follows a team of explorers who set out on a journey to find the lost Incan "Treasure of the Trinity," and also highlighted the Original Mediamade *Pacific Warriors*, which follows commercial fishermen fishing out of kayaks in Hawaii.

A focus for him, he added, has been drawing female audiences to the net – an objective he has put into action by casting women in many of Discovery Channel's forthcoming programs.

"For us, in *Pacific Warriors*, one of our fisher-folk is a woman, and you'll see that with so many of the shows," said Ross. "We'll have a female deckhand on *Deadliest Catch* for the first time. We have a show coming called *Killing Fields* [from Sirens Media and dealing with histories behind remote locales in which crimes have occurred] where women are part of the cast there.

"I think with most people, you watch more if you see yourself on television. So whether it's *Alaska Bush People* or any of our shows, if you see women on, women are more likely to watch. That doesn't

On Discovery's slate: treasure hunts, vintage cars, fisher-folk, mountainous terrain and a Naked and Afraid spin-off.

mean that men don't watch in whatever numbers, but it allows [women] to be invited."

Remaining new series headed to Discovery Channel include the Renegade 83-produced survival series *Naked and Afraid XL*, a spin-off of the popular series that will feature 12 participants; Pilgrim Studios' *Cuban Chrome*, on American vintage cars in Cuba; and the previously announced *Lunar XPrize* from Arrow Media, which follows the titular international space competition that asks contestants to launch and land a robot on the Moon.

Other special programming events include 'Motor Mondays,' which will feature such series as Fast N' Loud and the return of 'Shark Week,' which will this year debut on July 5. **MR** 

# ESQUIRE NETWORK

Esquire Network's slate for 2015 includes five new series that run the gamut from fine wines to the search for the perfect burger.

Comedians of LA (w/t), produced by L. Plummer Media, follows rising comedians in Hollywood as they aspire to climb the comedy ladder and compete with each other for the big gigs. A companion series, Living with Funny, will air on Oxygen and focus on the comedians' home lives with wives and girlfriends. Thus far, Brandon T. Jackson is the first comedian to have signed on for both shows, with additional cast members to be announced.

Also on the slate is Left/Right's Somm, which follows six aspiring master sommeliers in New

# On Esquire Network's slate: comedians, sommeliers, and backyard BBQ kings.

York City as they prepare for the Court of Masters Sommelier exam. Jason Wise, director of the documentary of the same name, and producer Christina Wise also serve as EPs for the show.

Coolfire Studios brings *United States of Burgers* to the table. The competition series pits backyard BBQ kings against each other in the hunt for the perfect burger.

Meanwhile, Going Deep with David Rees is moving from National Geographic Channel to

Esquire. Produced by True Entertainment, the series features writer/comedian/entrepreneur Rees investigating the science and history behind everyday tasks. Rounding out the slate of upcoming series for Esquire is *The Agent* from Herzog & Co. **BW** 



Mark & Derek's Excellent Flip follows dancers and house flippers Derek Hough and Mark Ballas.

# HGTV

House flipping, renovation competitions and the search for the elusive dream home factor into HGTV's slate for 2015/2016.

April saw the premieres of *Log Cabin Living*, which follows families as they eschew the hustle and bustle of big city life in favor of a simpler existence in the country; and *Mark and Derek's Excellent Flip*, starring *Dancing with the Stars* dancersturned-house flippers Derek Hough and Mark Ballas.

May brought the debuts of *Sale of Two Cities*, which compares real estate pricing in two dramatically different locales; and *Living Big Sky*, following couples considering making the move to "big sky country" in Montana.

June, meanwhile, offers up more of the Scott brothers of *Property Brothers* fame via *Brother vs. Brother*, in which the Scotts head to Las Vegas to face off against each other in a house-flipping competition. Another popular HGTV duo, Tarek and Christina El Moussa, appear in *Flip or Flop Follow Up*, and cousins Anthony Carrino and John Colaneri stage kitchen renovation interventions in *America's Most Desperate Kitchens* in July.

Lastly, July also brings *Beach Flip* to the sked, in which four teams congregate on the beaches of Gulf Shores, Alabama, for a renovation competition.

Returning series include season two of Ellen's Design Challenge, as well as more Property Brothers, Love It or List It, Fixer Upper, Flip or Flop and Rehab Addict. **BW** 

# INVESTIGATION DISCOVERY

Highlights from ID's forthcoming season - which includes 650 hours of original programming - include the Lincoln Square Productionsmade American Scandal with Barbara Walters, in which the iournalist revisits compelling stories from her career; the series Forbidden Love, on couples who face extreme obstacles to be together; Killer Confessions, which features murderers revealing their criminal acts; and Evil Lives Here, about people who have shared their homes with killers. The roster joins the previously announced Death by Gossip with Wendy Williams and Do Not Disturb: Hotel Horrors.

During parent company Discovery



American Scandal with Barbara Walters sees the journalist revisit stories from her career.

Communications' upfronts in March, Henry Schleiff – group president of Investigation Discovery, Destination America, American Heroes Channel, Discovery Life Channel and Discovery Family Channel – discussed the net's upcoming scripted project, the October Films-produced, three-parter Serial Thriller.

"We've been doing scripted in terms of our recreations for quite some time, so this small step really represents the next logical step," he said.

When asked whether there may be more scripted in the net's future, Schleiff said, "Absolutely, as long as the material justifies it."

"We don't want to lose our calling card," he added. "We are reality. We're reality first. If scripted brings an element of clarification, or raising a level of awareness to a story, we'll look at doing scripted. But fundamentally, we know what our audience likes and it's these incredibly grabbing, compelling docu-true stories." **MR** 

A science anthology series from exec producers Ron Howard and Brian Grazer is in the works at National Geographic Channel.

Each episode of *Breakthrough* will be helmed by a different Hollywood director and focus on the stories, people and technology behind innovations in the areas of brain science, longevity, water, energy, pandemics and cyborg technology.

Angela Bassett, Peter Berg, Paul Giamatti, Akiva Goldsman, Brett Ratner and Howard have signed on to direct the six-episode, hour-long series, which is being coproduced by Imagine Entertainment and Asylum Entertainment, and backed by GE.

Other new unscripted titles coming soon to NGC are 50 States of Survival, a location-based competition show from National Geographic Studios; and the Icon Films-produced Primal Survival, in which adventurer Hazen Audel uses tribal training to survive in remote locales.

National Geographic Studios is also producing The Great Human Race, which follows adventurers Bill Schindler and Cat Bigney as they trace the migratory route of human ancestors over 35,000 miles. *The Yard*, meanwhile, is an Original Productions series about engineers, mechanics

and carpenters working for a remote Alaskan shipbuilding operation.

The network is also rebooting long-running science and natural history documentary strand 'Explorer' for a 12-episode run. Topics to be covered include the evolution of the eye, the ongoing conflict inside the Congo's Virunga National Park and Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Returning series include Life Below Zero, Drugs, Inc., Wicked Tuna, Live Free or

*Die, Brain Games* and the Neil deGrasse Tysonhosted talk show *Star Talk*, which returns in the fall for a 10-episode second season.

The channel will also air a scripted miniseries about America's founding settlers called *Saints* & *Strangers*, as well as *America's National Parks*, a

On Nat Geo's

slate: science

anthologies,

adventurers

aplenty, and

the return

of the iconic

'Explorer.'

blue-chip special produced in partnership with Nat Geo Wild and the U.S. National Parks System that looks at North America's natural wonders.

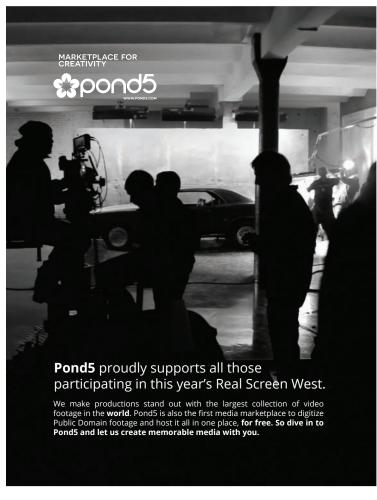
The specials join the hybridcomedy miniseries History of the World... For Now, from Altschuler & Krinsky Works and National Geographic Studios, and summer specials American Genius and The 2000s: A New Reality, which will air on June 1 and July 12 to 13, respectively.

Meanwhile, Nat Geo Wild has a slew of veterinarian-

focused docuseries on the way. The channel picked up *Vet School* from Thinkfactory Media, which follows students studying in Cornell

024





Dog trainer Cesar Milan will return to Nat Geo Wild for a third season of Cesar 911. Other renewals include The Incredible Dr. Pol, Dr. Oakley Yukon Vet and Dr. K's Exotic Animal ER.

Upcoming natural history specials include Wild Yellowstone from Brain Farm; Wild Sri Lanka from Terra Mater Factual Studios; Wild Atlantic from BBC Natural History; Wild South Africa from Studio Hamburg Doclights/NDR; and Wings of Life, Deep Blue and Oceans, all from Disneynature. **KR** 

# POP ///////

An a cappella singing competition from producer John Legend and projects from Gail Berman and Nigel Lythgoe are among the titles on U.S. cable network Pop's 2015/2016 programming and development slates.

The newly rebranded TV Guide Network is planning to premiere more than 300 hours of original programming this year including *Sing It On*, billed as a "real-life *Pitch Perfect* docuseries" about collegiate a cappella groups, which premieres on May 13. Core Media Group and musician John Legend's Get Lifted Film Co. are producing.

Other unscripted shows premiering this spring and summer on Pop include *Don't Blink*, about underground street musicians; and *Queens of Drama* from Thinkfactory Media, which debuted in April.

The Peacock Alley Productions reality sitcom *Unusually Thicke* starring actor Alan Thicke and his family will debut in the summer and season two, which is in production, will air in the fall.

Other returning series include *Rock This Boat*, a Jarrett Creative Group-produced docuseries that takes viewers on board the New Kids on the Block

On Pop's slate: a cappella competitions, street musicians, pop culture trivia, and soap opera stars.

cruise ship; and *The Story Behind*, which goes behind the scenes on iconic TV shows.

In addition to previously announced development projects *Elvis Duran Project*, *Jet to The Set*, *Celebrity Inc.* and *Losing It*, Pop is developing the pop culture trivia show *Doubt* with executive producers Nigel Lythgoe and Gail Berman, and Eric Levy/The Jackal Group.

The network has also signed a first-look development deal with Legend's Get Lifted Film Co. and is working on another project with the recent Oscar winner. **KR** 

025

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# SCIENCE CHANNEL

A science experiment-game show hybrid and a psychology-focused *Outrageous Acts of Science* spin-off are among the slate of programming headed to Science Channel in the coming year.

One of the series that is representative of the net's latest direction is *Secret Space Disasters*, which details in hourlong episodes the "incredible near misses, close calls, unexpected encounters, and dangerous discoveries" in the history of human space travel, and is to air in the fourth quarter of 2015.

Meanwhile, 2016 will kick off with the series *Geek Out* or *Freak Out*, a game-show and science experiment hybrid – filmed in front of a live studio audience – that tests contestants' scientific knowledge through challenges involving chemical reactions, physics and human stunts. Also airing early next year is *Machine Men* (working title), which follows engineer Justin Gray and his company Graywrx, which creates specialized tech solutions for clients ranging from Hollywood execs to local marijuana farmers.

Later in the year, Science Channel is to premiere Short-Attention-Span Science, which aims to answer complex questions about science in two and a half minutes or less, tackling everything from the Big Bang to why jingles get stuck in our heads. Also debuting is True Spy (w/t), which tells the stories of international and corporate spies who stole scientific secrets, carried out acts of sabotage and led double lives. The series uses dramatic recreations to follow real-life stories.

New programming for the remainder of 2015 includes the May premiere of *Outrageous Acts of Psych* (OAP), which is billed as taking "the hidden camera phenomenon to the next level" by setting up scenarios that reveal telling aspects of the human psyche. The series – which is a spin-off of *Outrageous Acts of Science* – aims to show whether people will pay for a VIP experience at a bus stop or a laundromat, or whether men or women are more likely to take a food sample from a person in a hazmat suit, with psychologists and human behavior experts offering insights into these actions.

Meanwhile, July will see the debut of the competition series *Race to Escape*, which sees two teams of three strangers trapped in places such as a locked barber shop, a bar and a 19th-century drawing room, from which they can only escape by solving clues hidden around the rooms. The more time the group takes to solve the clues, the less money they stand to win as a cash prize.

The net is also readying a Thanksgiving special around the series What Could Possibly Go Wrong? The event – which will air on Thanksgiving night (November 26) – is to feature hosts Kevin Moore and Grant Reynolds as they recreate Thanksgiving-themed Internet "fails." MR



A family singing sensation brings its act to TLC in The Willis Family.

# 

Family, style and life's milestones are the focal points for TLC's 2015/2016 slate.

On the family front, the 19 Kids and Counting network confirmed that the U.S. version of popular UK format Long Lost Family, from Shed Media, will air in the first quarter of this year. MAK Pictures, meanwhile, is behind the upcoming Hardly Royal (w/t), which follows Maryland native David Drew as he attempts to claim his title as heir and King of the Isle of Man in the UK. The series debuts in the third quarter of this year.

Figure 8 Films and Heart Bridge Media debuted docuseries *The Willis Family*, following the singing act of the same name, in May.

High Noon Entertainment will present *Quinceañera* (w/t) in the third quarter of 2015. The series follows party planners in Miami who plan gatherings for Latin American families celebrating their daughters' transitions into womanhood. Meanwhile, Magilla Entertainment and Flower Films have *I Got You Babies* (w/t) on tap for the first quarter of 2016, which will follow four sets of first-time parents.

Fashion and wedding fare includes Dare to Wear from Shed Media U.S., in which style expert Tai Beauchamp has two women adopt each other's fashions. Half Yard Productions, the team behind Say Yes to the Dress, brings bridal makeover series Brides Gone Styled, with hosts Gretta Monahan and Robert Verdi. Both series are slated for Q2, 2015.

Fashion makeover series include #SaveMyStyle from Haymaker Content and social media savvy-series Swipe Right, featuring Clinton Kelly and Devyn Simone, from Jane Street Entertainment. Both are slated for Q3, 2015.

Life's milestones are examined via such series as Marriage Pact (w/t) from Magical Elves, which asks whether marriages with best friends or "friends with benefits" have better shots at success (third quarter of 2015). Thinkfactory Media also tackles marriage through Married by Mom and Dad (w/t), in which parents find marriage partners for sons and daughters. 3Ball Entertainment will put a new spin on the weight loss series with an as yet untitled program in which central characters aim to transform themselves to win the affection of their crushes.

Upcoming specials include 3 Bad Dates, 1 Soul Mate from October Films and Extreme Dream Weddings from Discovery Studios. **BW** 

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In Boy to Man, adventurer and filmmaker Tim Noonan explores tribal initiation rituals.

# TRAVEL CHANNEL '

Scripps' Travel Channel has slated seven series and one pilot for 2015/2016, ranging from versions of popular international formats to adventure-oriented fare.

The network will roll out a U.S. version of the Dutch format *Hello Goodbye*, in which cameras capture the emotions and drama in the stories of those arriving to and departing from American airports. Ellen DeGeneres's A Very Good Production and Telepictures produce.

Also on tap: 50/50, starring Samantha Brown and Chris Grundy and billed as a "spontaneous adventure with a twist;" Five Star Secrets, hosted by Anthony Melchiorri and looking at the world's top hotels; and Rev Runs Around the World, featuring Reverend Run of Run DMC and Rev Run's Renovation fame.

Filmmaker Tim Noonan stars in an

exploration of coming-of-age rituals in *Boy to Man*, while American national parks take center stage in *Majestic America* (w/t). Journalist and author Alison Stewart hosts *Follow Your Past*, which sees regular Americans discovering their personal connections to historical events, and a new pilot, *Relocated*, follows families who make the decision to pick up and relocate over two half-hour episodes.

Wild Things with Dominic Monaghan moves to Travel Channel for its third season, and the net has acquired seasons one and two, as well as the first two seasons of An Idiot Abroad. **BW** 

# TRUTV

Adam Ruins Everything, from Big Breakfast, features host Adam Conover employing a blend of comedy, history and science to disprove widespread misconceptions of information we take for granted. The 11 x 30-minute series grew out of a CollegeHumor original online series that has garnered more than 30 million views since its debut in 2014.

The Driver's Seat (w/t), meanwhile, endeavors to find out what people really talk about while driving. Prompted by their GPS units, drivers and passengers will engage in comical conversations about a variety of topics. The 12 x 30-minute series is from Original Media.

Pilots include an untitled project with Tom Segura and Christina Pazsitsky, following the married comedians as they navigate the transformation from broke 20-somethings to relatively stable 30-somethings living in sunny Southern California. *Smartface* (w/t), from Alevy Productions and Core Media Group, is a "guerilla-style game show" in which contestants must pick random individuals to answer questions on their behalf, based on appearance alone.

Other pilots include MaryJanes (w/t), a docuseries from Pilgrim Studios that follows a family-run marijuana distribution business operated by four women along with their parents, grandparents, and brother. Matador brings The FXFL (w/t) to truTV, following NFL hopefuls playing in a football minor league, and Jake and Amir, from Electus and Pacific Electric Picture Co., features CollegeHumor stars Jake Hurwitz and Amir Blumenfeld. **BW** 

# ON THE DIGITAL SLATE

Highlights for AOL include Beyond the Horizon with Jared Leto, billed as an interview documentary series, that sees the actor and musician "engaging in conversations about the future with the world's most interesting visionaries in the arenas of science, art. technology and politics:" Act Like a Musician. which brings actors into the rehearsal studio with their favorite bands to learn and perform one of their biggest hits; Citizen Mars, which will feature "extensive vérité" as it follows five finalists from the Mars 100 competition moving to the next round of selection; and #BUILTBYGIRLS: Girl U, in which four young women are given a crash course in a subject - ranging from film and fashion to business and robotics - by a different "influencer" in each episode, and must complete a challenge related to it in just 24 hours.

Highlights for Yahoo!, meanwhile, include The Ultimate DJ, a DJ competition from Simon Cowell's Syco Entertainment and partners; I Am Naomi, an interview show featuring supermodel Naomi Campbell; and Riding Shotgun with Michelle Rodriguez, in which the Fast & Furious star test drives new cars.

MCN Collective Digital Studio (CDS) brings Epic Tool Time, in which Harley Morenstein and the team behind CDS sensation Epic Meal Time are getting out of the kitchen and into the shed to "create extreme gadgets that men only dream about." Also on the way from CDS: Fake Company Incorporated, in which Charlie Todd and his performance art/prank collective Improv Everywhere will create a fake, hidden camera-outfitted office

Condé Nast Entertainment will launch a a new channel – its 19th – geared towards female Latino millennials. Vida Belleza will feature a mix of programming covering beauty, food, lifestyle, celebrity, culture and docuseries, and will launch later this year.

And while Vice Media co-founder and CEO Shane Smith didn't identify the "new channel" that some of its NewFront-featured content will be heading to, he did highlight several new series, including *Gaycation*, an LGBT-focused travelog hosted by Ellen Page, and *Vice Portraits*, an interview show featuring comedian and podcaster Marc Malon. **BW** 



PactUS is the association of US Television and Content Producers to represent the full range of their commercial interests.

PactUS works with both producers and buyers to support the growth of a successful local television production community. It represents all content producers regardless of genres or platforms.

While it is an American organization owned and controlled by its members and expressing American interests, PactUS builds on several decades of experience of Pact in the UK and draws on its expertise across all types of production in multiple territories. It builds membership across the English speaking markets.

In a changing television world facing disruption and globalization, PactUS helps its producers navigate developing issues and take advantage of emerging opportunities.

PactUS provides value to its members by assisting with:

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- Market information and practical guides for the best contract templates for development, production and future exploitation. Also providing the latest data on topics such as State tax rebates, insurance issues and international markets and their buyers.
- Provision of regular information as well as webinars, workshops and seminars of real value.
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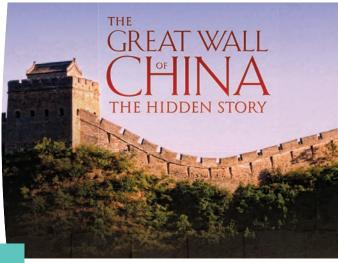
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BY MANORI RAVINDRAN

Romance in reality programming has come a long way since The Bachelor debuted. Now, unscripted series addressing love and relationships are focusing more on what's behind real love than fantasy flings.

roles – and dating apps such as Tinder and OKCupid providing distractions in the meantime - relationship-themed unscripted programming reflects a reality in which traditional romance is taking a backseat to alternative arrangements.

"Dating and relationships are very different than they were 15 years ago," Adam Reed, executive VP of Thinkfactory Media, tells realscreen. "Now you're swiping on your phone and you're deciding who you want, who you don't. You've never really met them in person, and now you're going on a date with them. I think all bets are off in the dating and relationship world as a society right now because there are more ways to find a significant other than there's ever been."

Reed is helping out in the match-making department with Thinkfactory's forthcoming TLC series Married by Mom and Dad, which finds four singles handing the reins to their love lives over to those who know them best.

"They're at the moment where they've looked at their parents and thought, 'Maybe they know something I don't. They know me better than anybody else in the world. I'm going to put this in their hands because whatever I've been doing isn't working." explains Nancy Daniels, GM for TLC.

The series – which is to air this fall – is representative of an "unromantic reality" trend of sorts, which sees an overhaul of the relationship space into one that's focused more on what's real, rather than what could be. This means exploring the work that comes after the wedding, and reflecting the open-mindedness with which today's singles approach dating.

Arranged are working for networks such as FYI – which is carving out a space for itself in the reality landscape with a growing stable of relationship shows - other programs such as A&E's swinger series Neighbors with Benefits and WE tv's couples therapy

show Sex Box didn't last longer than a handful of episodes. Are there limits to how alternative a relationship show can be, and if so, where are viewers drawing the line?

One of the first shows to tackle trouble in paradise was WE tv's Marriage Boot Camp, which in 2013 launched with

FYI's Arranged (above) looks at three modern American arranged marriages with different cultural tenors.

a "Bridezillas" version, and last year debuted a "Reality Stars" edition. The Thinkfactory Mediaproduced series sees a number of conflicted couples live together and participate in an intensive marriage boot camp with counselors Elizabeth Carroll and Jim Carroll.

"The celebrities we have on Marriage Boot Camp, of course they're loud and at times outrageous, but beyond the salaciousness and outrageousness of what they're doing, you as a viewer can watch - whether you're in a relationship or not - and you can see yourself reflected in them," says Reed.

### REINVIGORATING THE GENRE

As for one show that has been a trailblazer in romantic programming, Reed doesn't miss a beat in citing FYI's Married at First Sight as the first in the "new wave" of relationship shows.

"I think it made other networks and producers stand up and go, 'Wait, the relationship space doesn't just have to be flat-lined, femaleoriented and the same old show. We can do something different, reinvigorate and reenergize the genre," says Reed.

The Kinetic Content-produced series – in which couples get married without ever having met, and then decide to stay together or divorce - was the ultimate risk for a fledgling network, but has paid dividends. In April, FYI debuted Arranged, where American couples enter arranged relationships orchestrated by their families, and in May greenlit The Seven Year Switch, in which restless spouses live with strangers for two weeks while reevaluating their marriages.

"We don't have the benefit of several decades of an established audience the way our competitors do, so we have to be more involved to get viewers to sample us," says Gena McCarthy, senior VP of programming and development for the net.

# "All bets are off in the dating world now because there are more ways to find a significant other than there's ever been."

"We have to be bold in our creative choices, but beneath the bold headlines of a Seven Year Switch title is a deeply credible, smart, thoughtful and playful approach."

Indeed, McCarthy assures that while FYI is taking numerous swings within the relationship space, the net treads carefully when it comes to taste.

"I often share a phrase with my team that someone taught me 20 years ago: 'provocative concept, credible treatment," she says. "We applied this to Married at First Sight, a concept some feared would be tawdry and cheap.

"If Married at First Sight is the honeymoon stage, The Seven Year Switch is the next phase, where cumulative issues surface when two people have lived together for nearly a decade. I think that's a relatable thing for viewers."

### **SEX VS. RELATIONSHIPS**

Elsewhere, two series that provoked viewers but with less successful results were A&E's Neighbors with Benefits, which followed a group of Ohio swingers and was cancelled after two episodes, and WE tv's Sex Box, an American remake of the Channel 4 series in the UK, which was pulled after five episodes.

Lauren Gellert, EVP of development and original programming for WE tv, maintains the series, in which couples have sex in a large on-set box and then discuss the experience with therapists, may have been a bold swing for the network, but was still a valid exploration of real relationships.

"It was just a different way of doing it, and we're still kind of looking at that show and thinking about how we might retool it," says Gellert.

(Continued on page 35) ▶



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### ◀ (Continued from page 34)

"Is our culture a little bit shy when it comes to talking about sex? Probably. Should it be? I don't think so," she added. "I think sex helps the marriage and helps the relationship."

Reflecting on Sex Box, Marriage Boot Camp counselor Elizabeth Carroll says she watched the show with interest, but believes it failed because it lacked the "deeper work" audiences want to see in the relationship space.

"[Viewers] weren't necessarily looking for the salacious, 'I want to see people having sex' thing," says Carroll. "They were like, 'Okay, I'll deal with the box thing but now I want to see the hearts and souls of these people and the struggles that they have.' People want answers. They want to be educated. They want to watch these couples and say, 'Oh, there's a takeaway for me personally.'"

Reed adds that North Americans may be opening up, but viewers are still wary when shows cross over from marriage and relationships into sex.

"Our society has a level of tolerance about how much sex and intimacy you can really talk about before it becomes – in certain people's minds – off-putting," says the exec. "And that may change



WE tv's Marriage Boot Camp reality stars edition illuminates the marital woes of the unscripted celeb set.

as our society gets even more freedom... but I think the difference in the determination is the focus on sex versus relationships."

Ultimately, most networks – like singles – are keeping their options open. TLC's entry into the relationship arena with 90 Day Fiance, in which couples in long-distance relationships use a 90-day visa to unite and determine if they should get married, was another risk that paid off. Now, as the net goes into production on Married by Mom and Dad, Nancy Daniels is

keeping the big picture at heart.

"I think that people are trying different avenues to find lasting love, and I don't think the traditional way has been working so they're willing and open to try different ways," says Daniels. "After many years of success in the bridal space, as we're branching out into relationships and not going at it in a typical 'dating show' way, it seems like a core element that people express is finding long and lasting love. And I think it's an area ripe for exploration."



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BY KEVIN RITCHIE

# **Transforming reality**



Trans characters are appearing in more television series now than ever before, and unscripted programming is being celebrated for respectfully reflecting their realities. But advocates say there's more work to be done.

t's not often that you hear reality television described as a "bright spot" by a media advocacy group.

But when it comes to portrayals of transgender lives on the small screen, the genre is considered more progressive than scripted and mainstream journalism in offering complex and realistic portrayals of a marginalized population.

"Reality TV, especially compared to scripted entertainment, has been a bright spot when it comes to transgender people being able to see themselves on television," says Nick Adams, the director of transgender media programs for LGBT media watchdog group GLAAD. "Typically, when you look at the way transgender characters have

been portrayed in scripted programming, they've either been psychopathic killers or tragic murder victims."

Adams is extra busy these days. There has been an uptick in interest around transgender issues in the media thanks in part to trans actor Laverne Cox's starmaking role on Netflix's women's prison show Orange is the New Black, and the success of Amazon Prime's Transparent, which won the Golden Globe for outstanding comedy series in January.

In January, so many transgenderthemed docuseries were being pitched at the Realscreen Summit that TLC's EVP of production and development Howard Lee joked during a panel that "transgender is the new 'redneck.'"

Since then, the Kardashian family's stepdad and former Olympic decathlete Bruce Jenner put to rest years of tabloid rumors and came out as a transgender woman in an ABC News interview watched by 17 million people.

Jenner is now set to star in his own docuseries for E!, while the Kardashians will discuss their reaction to his decision to transition in a two-hour special for the same network.

The Jenner series is one of four reality shows starring trans characters to emerge within the past six months.

In April, Discovery Life aired the fiveepisode New Girls on the Block. ABC Family will premiere Becoming Us in June and TLC is targeting a summer premiere for All That Jazz, about trans activist and YouTube star Jazz Jennings.

The sudden interest from both reality and scripted producers is part of a groundswell of activism and exposure around issues, such as violence and discrimination, that have led to more conscientious reporting regarding trans people.

Although cable and streaming media have embraced trans stories, reality producers for the big four broadcasters – CBS, NBC, ABC and Fox—have yet to feature trans cast members on tentpole reality franchises such as *The Amazing* 

Race, Survivor, Big Brother, The Voice and American Idol. Also, trans men typically are less visible on TV than trans women.

In scripted, as Adams says, the situation is far worse, with trans characters generally falling into three categories: psychotic killer, murder victim or sex worker.

Last November, GLAAD published its third annual "Trans Images on TV" report that noted improvements in the way trans people were spoken about and portrayed: 54% of representations of trans characters on episodic TV were classified as "outright defamatory," 34% ranged from "problematic to acceptable" and 12% were outstanding, with most of the language regarding the character spoken by a show's protagonist. (GLAAD does not have research into representations of trans people in unscripted.)

More broadly, a GLAAD/Harris Interactive poll found only 8% of Americans said they personally know a trans person although Adams believes that number is slightly higher now.

Thus, broadcast remains an important frontier because of its reach and ability to expose viewers to issues facing transgender Americans. "Media is really critical for transgender people because for those 92% of Americans who think they don't know someone who is transgender, everything they're learning about this community is coming through the media," says Adams.

AMC's Small Town Security, MTV's The Real World, The CW's America's Next Top Model and ABC's Dancing with the Stars, which featured competitor Chaz Bono on season 13, are examples of unscripted series that portrayed trans people in progressive lights.

Before Laverne Cox became the first trans person to grace the cover of *Time*, she was a struggling actor who signed on to the VH1 reality show *I Want To Work For Diddy*.

That led VH1 to greenlight her makeover series TRANSform Me, which she also produced, and later, after OITNB became a hit, she returned to the Viacom-owned net

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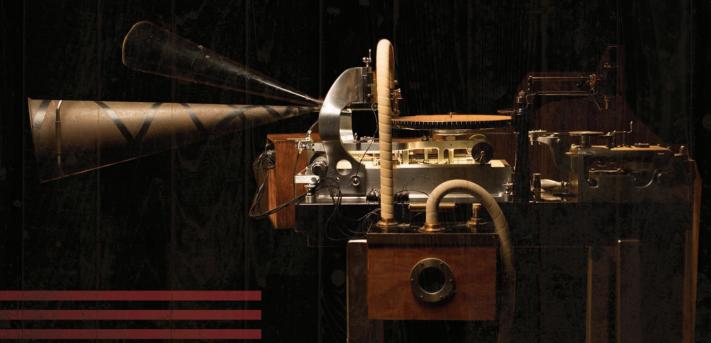
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### THE REALITY REPORT

for the doc Laverne Cox Presents: The T Word.

A common thread among the current crop of reality shows is that gender identity is seen as the jumping-off point for the drama. The focus is not on a character's coming out, but rather the universal issues cable execs like to see in a story arc regardless of whether the main character is transgender, a veterinarian or a Kardashian.

Producers at This Is Just A Test pitched All That Jazz to Marjorie Kaplan, group president for TLC, Animal Planet and Velocity, who liked that it was about a multigenerational family living under one roof.

"Jazz is on the precipice of puberty, which is a trying time even if you're not transgender," explains TLC general manager Nancy Daniels. "But being transgender and facing puberty we felt was a moment in her life that would provide a lot of interesting stories. That is what really popped for us. It was at a moment of change for them as a family."

All That Jazz is the first TLC show focused on a transgender character, so education became part of the development process. Producers talked with the family to get a sense of what they wanted to share and the gender pronouns Jazz uses, as well as "Trans 101"-type facts, such as the difference between gender identity and sexual orientation.

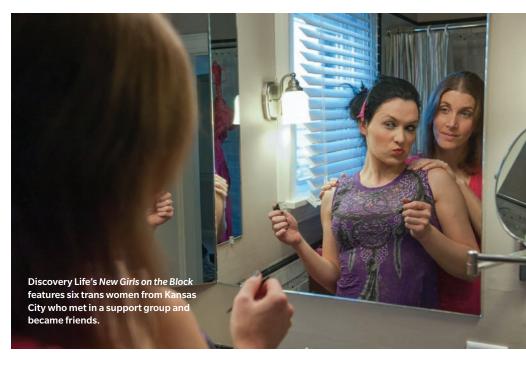
"There is certain language we've all educated ourselves on because we want to make sure that we're treating her family, her world and her life in a respectful way," says Daniels.

Indeed, when announcing the upcoming Bruce Jenner series, E! also listed three community consultants, including GLAAD. Such consultations can involve anything from screening rough cuts and providing notes to training sessions for development, programming and PR execs.

ABC Family prides itself on pro-social scripted programming such as *The* Forsters, which featured a trans

teen character. This year, the network is upping its original programming hours and commissioning more unscripted as a result.

Last fall, execs chased Ryan Seacrest Productions' trans-themed series *Becoming Us* after the sizzle tape ignited a bidding war. The show is about a 17-year-old boy from Evanston, Illinois whose father transitions to become a woman, and whose girlfriend's father is also transitioning.



"Their stories are so dramatic and so emotional that you don't need to construct things," says Marci Cooperstein, the channel's VP of programming and development. "There is a challenge to stay relevant and tell the most compelling stories. Stories that haven't been told are really attractive."

Just as the networks take their cues from the trans talent and their families in framing their stories, so too do the producers and crew.

On Discovery Life's Kansas City-set New Girls on the Block, the style is more vérité than "réalité."

"Reality TV has

when it comes

to transgender

on television."

been a bright spot

people being able

to see themselves

The show follows six trans women who met in a support group and became friends. At times, they can seem overly camera-conscious, but in other scenes the emotions are raw and visceral.

"It wasn't like we cast friends from around the country and put people together to tell a story," explains Julie

Meisner-Eagle, the network's VP of production and development. "They're all friends and they live in Kansas City. Any story we tell has to have an organic thread and real relationships with stakes and with heart."

For the premiere episode, producers asked one of the women, Macy, and her wife, Sharon, to host a get-together for Sharon's family so they could meet her since-transitioned husband as a woman for the first time. The tension in the scene is palpable, as Sharon was also grappling with how to proceed in the relationship while remaining supportive.

"There are a couple touch and go moments in that scene," says Colin Whelan, executive producer for Conveyor Media, the show's prodco. "We were surprised how challenging the whole process was for Sharon. She had to let go of her husband, but she gained a new close friend. It was fascinating and poignant."

In episode three, another character, Aiyana, meets her estranged mother after three years in a scene that also proved emotional for cast and crew.

"We were crying when we were filming it," recalls Whelan. "There were a couple jerky moments with the cameras because people were getting pretty emotional. I've never done a show like that where it's so real and powerful, it's hard to keep your objectivity as a producer."

GLAAD's Adams likes that *New Girls* is not focused on the coming-out narrative and lauds it as a "sophisticated" example of trans-centric TV. But although reality is a progressive area, he cautions that there is still work to do.

Adams likens overall coverage of trans issues to a time in the past when gay, lesbian and bisexual people were constantly asked for their coming-out stories.

"The focus continues to be fixated on the transition narrative and not transgender people being themselves in everyday life," he says. "With transgender people, the media in general is still where the gay stories were in the 1970s and the '80s." •

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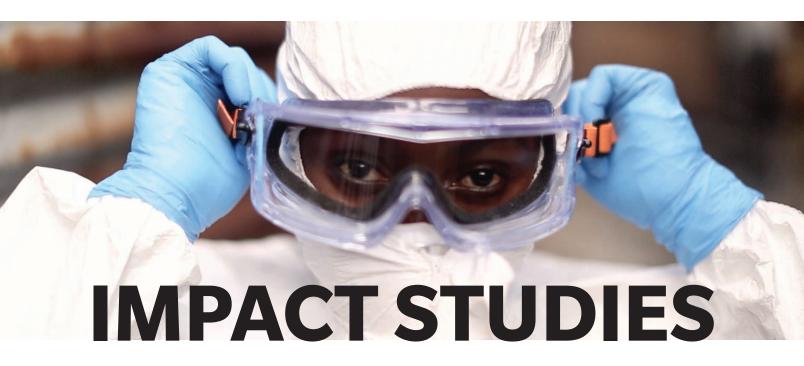






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Issue-driven documentaries have the ability to affect social change, but that potential is magnified by a successful and smart social impact campaign. Here, filmmakers, distributors and programming execs discuss the evolving relationship between filmmaking and outreach.

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

Body Team 12 follows "body collectors" who gather corpses of those who died from the Ebola outbreak.

uring a panel on impact investing at this year's Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary
Festival, funders and strategists tackled how a film's potential to instigate social change is being considered much earlier in the process.

What kind of doc is best suited to a social impact campaign and when should filmmakers start thinking about creating one? That depends on who you ask.

"If you feel the film is going to make you want to slit your wrists because it's too damn depressing, that's not going to work," said Steve Cohen, co-founder of impact media non-profit, Chicago Media Project, and a member of Impact Partners, during the panel. "If the film can show a way in – even if it's a relatively small way in – that is going to work because we can see a way that the film is going to propel the larger issue." Producers, distributors and funders of

documentaries are finding that affecting

social change and making money do not have to be mutually exclusive goals. Increasingly, investors are eyeing issue-driven documentaries that are both entertaining and actionable. Thinking about impact early can pay off when a documentary is finished because NGOs and foundations that bought in can then help with petitions, screenings for activists and organizations, educational components and lobbying.

Last year, Participant Media and eBay founder Jeff Skoll teamed up with the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television to launch the Skoll Center for Social Impact Entertainment with a US\$10 million gift. In the U.S. Midwest, Cohen's Chicago Media Project helps connect third-party organizations with content creators interested in similar causes, and in 2011 the Ford Foundation pledged \$50 million toward social-issue documentaries.

On the network side, cable nets such as Discovery are once again scheduling

docs; Participant launched Pivot, a socially-conscious cable channel aimed at millennials; and CNN has upped its investment in docs and scored a break-out hit with *Blackfish*, a doc that triggered a wave of negative press, and class-action lawsuits accusing SeaWorld with animal cruelty.

Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Paul Allen's Vulcan Productions is teaming up with Discovery Communications and social impact firm Picture Motion to craft a social campaign around Discovery's global broadcast of *Racing Extinction* this fall. And on the distribution side, *20 Feet From Stardom* and *Citizenfour* distributor Radius-TWC has hired an in-house social campaign director, Dan O'Meara.

### **FINDING THE BALANCE**

According to BritDOC's Impact Field Guide and Toolkit, the top two problems filmmakers have is, not surprisingly, lack of funding and finding time to raise money.

### **DOC FOCUS**

The trick is finding the funders who not only believe in a film's issue, but its narrative approach.

At the Hot Docs panel, Cohen said Impact Partners invests in 15 to 20 documentaries each year on an equity basis. Criteria includes subject matter, the film's narrative style and

whether it could have a social return. "If it's simply a polemic type of film we're going to pass on that," he said.

BritDOC and Sundance surveyed 200 docmakers and found conflicted attitudes around the filmmaker's role in social change campaigns: 79% agreed "filmmakers are benefitting from the growth in outreach campaigns" but 76% also agreed that "filmmakers are increasingly being pressured into becoming campaigners as well."

The majority – 55% – felt that art and story should come first and "social change agendas get in the way and can undermine a work's integrity." (29% disagreed and 16% neither agreed nor disagreed.)

Filmmaker Kirby Dick's last five films have been social issue docs, including *The Invisible War*, which helped put the issue of sexual assault in the military on the public and political radar. Although he is aware of a film's potential to affect change, his primary goal is to make a powerful film.

"I find people who invest also want the film to be a really good film," he says. "There's something very artful about undertaking challenging investigative journalism and I think audiences sense that. The revelations that come in response to ground-breaking journalism add to the cinematic experience."

Dick and producer Amy Ziering are in the midst of a social campaign for *The Hunting Ground*, a doc about institutional coverups of sexual assaults on U.S. college and university campuses. It opened in cinemas in February.



Top: Inequality For All; bottom: How To Dance in Ohio

In tandem with the theatrical release, distributor Radius-TWC undertook 450 screenings on post-secondary campuses to get school presidents and administrators to see it and hopefully meet with

activists and sexual assault survivors. During one week in April, there were 20 campus screenings per day.

Dick credits Radius-TWC with orchestrating the strategy, which is unusual for a first-run theatrical release.

"Partially they are committed to the issue and partially they see it as, in the long run, financially beneficial," he says. "We've seen that with *The Invisible War* – once a film engages the public on this level, it can have a long life on Netflix and other ancillaries."

Radius-TWC has run social impact campaigns for six of 10 documentaries it has released, beginning with Jacob Kornbluth's 2013 film about income inequality, *Inequality For All*. The distributor spent between US\$125,000 to \$175,000 on a social impact campaign, which broke even, says copresident Tom Quinn, thanks to \$1.2 million in tickets sold.

His company will pay seven figures to acquire a feature doc and commit more "bandwidth" to pushing a social campaign than it would for a star-driven fiction film –



as long as it is also entertaining.

"Every filmmaker needs to ask the question, what is it you want to have happen to your movie?" says Quinn. "If the film is solely in service of the issue then don't sell your film for a million dollars, because if you sell it for a million dollars you've put another party in the position of having to recoup on that million-dollar investment.

"There are a lot of movies out there that have an energized base of activists who are willing to come out and support it," he adds. "We would rather work on a film that can function as both: as a rallying cry for the base, but also something that is informative and can function as a movie."

Inequality For All met that criteria because it translated economic statistics and data around its issue into understandable terms. It was also a polemic that posited an argument people could discuss and debate with friends.

"Films that are frankly more nuanced and journalistic and are not on a single issue, they tend to be a little harder to organize a



Left: The Hunting Ground; right: director Kirby Dick (left), DP Thaddeus Wadleigh (center) and producer Amy Ziering.

social action campaign around," says Dan O'Meara, Radius-TWC's social impact campaign director. "That doesn't mean that over time it can't have an impact; it's just that during the time of the release it's hard to affect group sales."

At HBO, the film comes first and the social impact comes second, whether it is a commission or an acquisition. The network airs 25 to 30 docs per year, of which around 20 usually have social impact angles.

Social issues of the day, such as mental health, income inequality, national security and gun violence are top of mind when execs are commissioning.

"I don't think we are necessarily weighing the filmmaker's ability to put together a social campaign when we are evaluating a film," says the premium U.S. cable net's SVP of documentary programming, Nancy Abraham. "We are evaluating it on the basis of what would make a great documentary film."

Abraham looks at social impact as an alternative marketing campaign as the network relies more on editorial coverage than paid advertising to drive viewership.

Execs take cues from the filmmaker's level of interest. Some are too busy, some have moved on to other projects and some arrive with robust social strategies, funding partners and third-party organizations for execs to coordinate with.

"We're definitely filmmaker-driven," she says. "It's not something where we say,

'Give us the film and we'll come up with an outreach campaign and tell you what it is later.' It's not like that."

### FINDING THE ACTIVIST AUDIENCE

A company with a different approach is Vulcan Productions, which conceives projects with impact as an end goal, and then finds the filmmaker who can best tell the story. The company has been working with director Louie Psihoyos on the campaign for *Racing Extinction*, which looks at the endangered species trade and the causes of mass extinction.

The director was nearly done shooting when he teamed up with Vulcan during Sundance 2014 to think about how the film could drive impact. They held a work-in-progress preview screening at the Tribeca Film Festival last year to gauge audience reaction.

"It's very rare that we would come in after a film was made," says Vulcan vice-president Carole Tomko. "We take our philanthropy, our technology, our innovation units and attack a problem from all of those angles. Then we overlay the content piece to ask how can we emotionally connect with an audience to get them to think about this in a very different way? How do we use storytelling in a different way?"

The company, which also worked on Ebola doc *Body Team 12*, is driven by a combination of impact and ROI. To measure

success Tomko looks at audience awareness, "which is super hard to measure," as well as third-party polls, TV ratings, adoption across schools, legislative change and whether or not business practices have changed.

The desired endgame for *Racing Extinction* is legislation around climate change. When a goal is political, Vulcan will begin the process of partnering with grassroots organizations up to a year ahead of when a bill is likely to be brought before the U.S. Congress.

The social impact campaign will last a year after Discovery's global broadcast this fall, and encompass 10 to 15 initiatives that will utilize Vulcan's philanthropy group and program specialists on ocean, endangered species and climate change.

Dick estimates that filmmakers can expect participation in social impact activities to tail off up to three years after a premiere, but before an issue takes on a life of its own, the filmmaker is the face.

"I want to take on a film that is so ambitious that there's a possibility for failure and I cannot see the end at the beginning," he says. "When you're dealing with major social issues that have not been covered in film, they are challenging. You have to use all your filmmaking skills to make a successful film." •

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Director Brett Morgen, helmer of 2012's Rolling Stones documentary Crossfire Hurricane, revisits rock and roll mythology through a new biographical subject – Kurt Cobain – and an array of rare archive material.

rett Morgen has spent the last few years of his career as a documentary filmmaker in a space between man and myth.

In 2007, rocker Courtney Love approached him, asking if he wanted to make a documentary about her late husband, Kurt Cobain. She was a fan of his 2002 film *The Kid Stays in the Picture*, which used primarily animated still photographs to recount the life of Hollywood producer Robert Evans, and thought Morgen could give the Nirvana front man's journals and artwork a similar treatment.

He was interested, but the project was temporarily sidelined by legal wrangling, and he moved on to *Crossfire Hurricane*, an all-archival, authorized doc about The Rolling Stones that aired on HBO in 2012.

Eight years after that initial meeting with Love, *Kurt Cobain: Montage of Heck* debuted at the Sundance Film Festival in January and screened at SXSW, Tribeca and Hot Docs before airing on HBO in May. The doc features never-before-seen home movies, artwork and recordings and is the first film to be produced with the blessing of Cobain's family, including his and Love's daughter, Frances Bean.

Unlike Crossfire Hurricane, Montage of Heck is about dispelling rock n' roll mythology, rather than reinforcing it, and required its director to employ all the mixed-media tricks used in his films to date.

"If you're going to do a film on Kurt it should be nothing short of honest, which mirrors the honesty and integrity in his message," Morgen tells *realscreen*.

"The intention wasn't to tear him down or build him up; it was to look him in the eye."

Although *Montage* is an authorized film, Cobain's 22-year-old daughter Frances Bean – who took over as the project's executive producer – gave Morgen final cut, something he did not have on *Crossfire*.

A towering figure in rock music whose career ended when he committed suicide in 1994, Cobain emerged from the Seattle punk scene in the late 1980s. His band Nirvana sold more than 75 million albums worldwide, catapulting what came to be called "grunge" into the music mainstream. Hits such as "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and "Lithium" tapped a vein of youth

disenfranchisement and turned the shy and insecure Cobain into a pop idol.

In the years before his death, tabloids branded Cobain as an unstable junkie and he was sometimes reviled as much as he was loved.

"One thing I felt doing the interviews is that all of the subjects felt haunted," explains Morgen.

"Like they hadn't fully had an opportunity – if they ever could – to come to a peaceful place. That was quite harrowing to experience."

To make Montage, Morgen needed access to Cobain's personal archive: 108 boxes of journals, artwork and, most crucially, never-before-heard cassette recordings of Cobain narrating autobiographical stories, that had been sitting untouched in cold storage.

Before he saw any of that material, Morgen turned to his longtime archival producer, Jessica Berman-Bogdan of Global ImageWorks and tasked her with tracking down every interview – video, audio and print – and piece of performance footage that she could.

Initially, the idea was to make a Kurt-on-Kurt-

Cobain's mom Wendy, father Don and stepmom Jenny had shared photographs, news clippings and home movies that thoroughly documented his happy childhood.

"It was pretty much like watching Kurt grow up before your eyes," says Morgen. "It was five-and-ahalf hours of pristine Super 8 that, unedited, told a very vivid story that was in stark contrast to one of Kurt's own foundation myths."

However, that footage ended when his parents divorced and Morgen had a gap from the time Cobain was eight until he was 21.

To make matters worse, Berman-Bogdan had tracked down interviews but many of the recordings had too much background noise or they were not taped for broadcast. The "Kurt Cobain by Kurt Cobain" idea was looking less doable.

"Sometimes that which you don't have is a blessing rather than a curse," reasons Morgen. "What those situations provide is an opportunity to do something more expressive. There is a limit, in a sense, to how deep you can penetrate a subject with pre-existing archival. However, with Kurt, I found the deeper we were able to get



Cobain's Nirvana bandmate, Krist Novoselic, pictured with director Brett Morgen (right).

inside him, the closer we would get."

Eight months into production, Love and Frances Bean signed a waiver granting Morgen access to the family vault. The boxes were laid out in a large viewing room that dwarfed the size of the loosely catalogued collection. He documented everything, including blank journal pages and blank cassettes.

"I'm an archivist at heart so that meant everybody had to wear white jumpsuits, white gloves and hairnets and handle the materials like they were the Holy Scriptures," he says. "When I opened Box 18, which simply said 'cassettes,' and

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saw that there were 200 hours of audio, that really became the inspiration for the movie."

He calls the discovery his "'Rosebud' moment." The audio, which the family had never heard, presented a side of Cobain rarely seen in interviews. One excerpt featured in a memorable animated sequence from the film hints at how Cobain might have reacted later on to the scandal-igniting Vanity Fair article alleging that Love did heroin while pregnant.

Cobain recounts the humiliating story of losing his virginity and later trying to commit suicide by sitting on a railroad track – only to have the train speed by on another set of tracks. "I can't handle the ridicule so I decided to kill myself," he says.

"I can't think of a moment in the audio when Kurt seemed perturbed, disturbed, bummed out. He always seemed so alive, happy and at peace," says Morgen. "That area of the film is the most intimate and the part of the movie where I feel closest to Kurt."

Meanwhile, across the country in Global ImageWorks' New Jersey office, Berman-Bogdan was busy asking collectors, MTV archives and Nirvana's label Universal Music, as well as many non-commercial sources, to dig deep for original source material.

The third-party footage came in on every late '80s/early '90s format imaginable and had to be transferred and restored. "We knew we would have varying quality, but that's part of the character of the film," she says. "When you're



Audio cassettes discovered in Cobain's vault provided Morgen with his "'Rosebud' moment."

in some of the clubs for some of those early performances and it's a gritty look, it works."

Having Frances Bean to name-check helped Berman-Bogdan gain the trust of collectors and fans that felt especially protective toward Cobain.

"Everyone seemed to have a very warm place for Kurt and cared about him. I thought that was

really fascinating," she says. "There have been a lot of stories about Kurt and about the myth. People appreciated we were looking at him as a human being as honestly as we could."

A particularly elusive cache of footage came in the form of material from the shooting of Nirvana's 1991 music video "Smells Like Teen Spirit," arguably the clip that propelled the band into stardom. No one knew where it was. Not the video's director, Samuel Bayer, not the editors, the production company nor the record label. Halfway through production, someone at Universal found it deep in a storage facility.

Morgen recut the outtakes into a sequence inspired by the myth of Dionysus that foreshadows Nirvana's massive popularity.

"In the edited version of that video, it feels like the band is inviting the crowd to participate in this act of rebellion," he explains. "In our reimagining of it, the crowd is threatening them and finally assaults, and then devours them."

Morgen has said that when he finished *Montage*, he went into a bathroom and cried for 25 minutes. "It was meant to be a personal journey about Kurt," says Berman-Bogdan. "I don't know if he realized how personal it would be for him." •

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A great story deserves great music.





# Sound advice

BY BARRY WALSH

Choosing music to use in your production shouldn't be an afterthought. Here, production music execs give you their top tips for staying on the right track to find the right tracks.

### YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT YOURSELF

Randy Wachtler, president and CEO of Warner/ Chappell Production Music, says that if you're going to use a music library, you should also use the knowledge at your disposal from the team at the music house. "Many production music suppliers are more than happy to provide music curation and select tracks for you on a moment's notice, thereby saving you hours of sifting through music tracks," he offers.

"We have a team of music researchers who source music all day so it is worth taking advantage of this service and their brainpower," says Lina Tebbs, head of television, Europe, for Audio Network. "Internal music researchers and supervisors know their libraries better than anyone, so it'll save you time and may give you a different perspective or ideas for your soundtrack."

Jingle Punks CEO Jared Gutstadt says there are several others on your team whose input is invaluable. "Trust your editor. They are the gateway to making smart music choices. Editors, production assistants, associate producers and producers all make up the pool of creative decisions being made in the day."

### **BE SPECIFIC**

While feedback may not be welcome while tracking guitars in a recording studio, it's a vital part of the music selection process, says Jonathan Parks, music supervisor and producer at New Yorkbased Alibi Music.

"Critical feedback is incredibly important," he says. "By informing a catalog music supervisor which tracks are close and which are far off, you will yield a much more honed-in follow-up search.

"Often, when it's not obvious what might work it is helpful to narrow down searches by ruling out what definitely won't work," he adds. "This can be done by explaining to a music supervisor that a track needs to be upbeat rock but definitely not aggressive, not include distortion, or not playful."

"'Emotional' is a great word but evoking emotion musically could take a few different forms," says Ken Nelson, SVP and EP at Firstcom Music. "But think about your scene. Is it emotional and intimate? Those are two great words to combine in your search for a variety of choices that allow you flexibility with your soundtrack."

### **BE CREATIVE**

Of course, while you want the music to complement and enhance the onscreen action, you don't want it to be overwhelming. "Be sure the track you've chosen is enhancing the viewer experience," says Warner/Chappell's Wachtler. "Great tracks have the ability to heighten the viewer experience only when chosen carefully and considering the visuals and other audio components such as voiceover, SFX and any natural sound."

You want your show to be fresh and original, so the music should be as well. "I love it when shows step away from the expected and use music that isn't in line with the TV genre," says Audio Network's Tebbs. "It makes both the music and content come alive when done right. I often suggest a 'wild card' track or two when sending track suggestions to clients."

"I have found that conversations about the characters, location, story themes, et cetera, result in better musical outcomes than basing music direction on, say, what is popular on the radio," says Nathan Devore, VP of music services and a composer for Vanacore Music. "When music direction is driven by enhancing the most important aspects of your show, then there will be context to draw from for inspiration."

#### **BE CAREFUL**

Take the time to get up to speed on clearances and other legalities that could trip you up if neglected.

"Know whether you're working with an exclusive or non-exclusive production music catalog," advises Black Toast Music CEO Bob Mair. "Working with an exclusive catalog eliminates a lot of confusion as well as the possibility of any legal conflict over who controls a song, and who gets paid, when it gets used."

# "I love it when shows step away from the expected and use music that isn't in line with the TV genre."

"Make sure you are paying for the good stuff," says lingle Punks' Gutstadt. "Free is never good."

#### **TRY TEMP TRACKS**

While most music houses will warn against falling prey to "temp love" – picking a piece of music that is either too pricey to license or just plain unavailable – there are ways to use temp music that won't end in tears.

"It's always helpful to mention more than just the title of the [temp] song; it's helpful to know why that temp song worked," says Black Toast's Mair. "Is it the lyric content, the tempo of the music, the groove, the instrumentation? Any information that helps us to know why that piece of music works in a particular scene is helpful with song replacement searches."

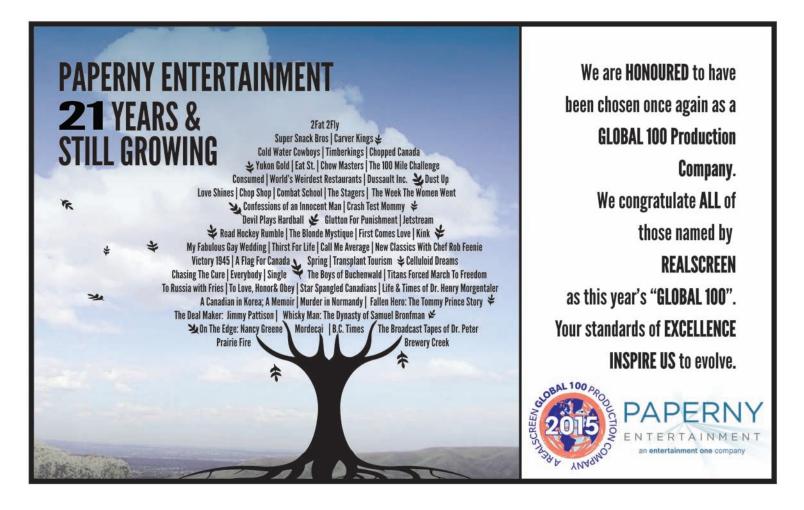
"If it's close but not working, then why isn't it working?" echoes Alibi Music's Parks.

### **MAKE MUSIC A PRIORITY**

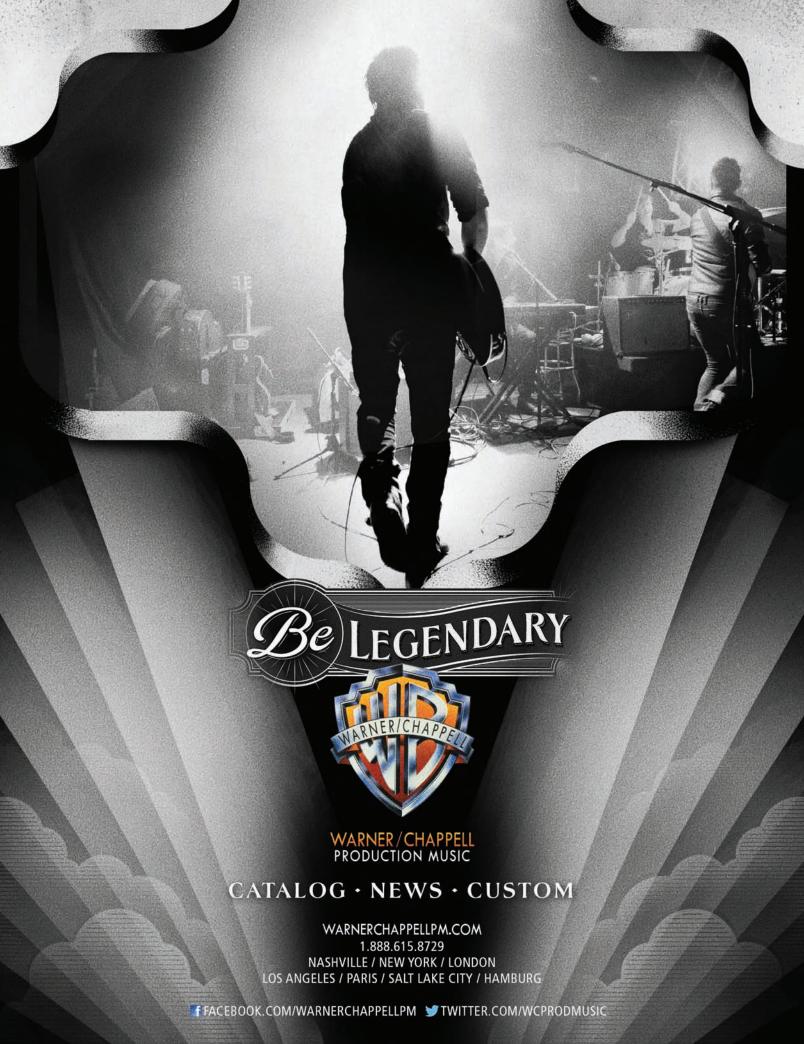
Lastly, knowing from the get-go how you want your show to sound – from the tracks themselves to the tonality of the music you want to complement the action – will ultimately help you make the right choices.

Vanacore's Devore says to think in terms of style, tone and energy. "Each one of these conveys a message to the audience," he says. "Style suggests what to think – EDM, for example, has a different connotation than rock or orchestral. Tone suggests how to feel and energy suggests what is happening."

"Music makes up so much of the final show that it's really important to consider what you want your show to sound like early on," sums up Tebbs.



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## CHANGEMAKERS

PEOPLE, TECHNOLOGY, IDEAS

# TRUELOVERULES BY BARRY WALSH

Filmmaker Alma Har'el stunned audiences and critics with her feature doc debut Bombay Beach. Her upcoming film, LoveTrue, continues to explore the worlds between non-fiction and narrative.





LoveTrue uses psychodrama techniques to explore its subject.

Ithough she has received numerous accolades worldwide for her film work - her debut documentary feature, Bombay Beach, took top doc honors at the 2011 Tribeca Film Festival – and her efforts as a music video director for such acts as Sigur Rós and Beirut, Alma Har'el is still nervous about discussing her upcoming film, LoveTrue.

The Israel-born filmmaker's latest work – which, in following three love stories, explores the nature of what we call "true love" through ruminations on memory, self-awareness and how we "perform" as the people we want to be when in relationships - will be shopped internationally by Dogwoof but won't be locked until July. But in talking about the film, both to limited press and to audiences at the Tribeca Film Festival who attended a work-in-progress presentation, Har'el says she hopes to have a clearer understanding of what the film should be.

Her award-winning short film for Sigur Rós's "Fjögur Piano," featuring actor and LoveTrue EP Shia LaBeouf, occupied a space that she calls "in between worlds" - an artistic short that could also function as what used to be known as a "music video." Similarly, her upcoming film, like Bombay Beach, uses techniques that may be outside of what purists may regard as "documentary" in an effort to get to the heart of its subject.

"I really live to work in that space where it's not a product, it's something you make that you're not really sure what it is until after you've made it," she says, talking to realscreen while taking a

break from editing the film.

It's a project that has been a few years in the making, with Har'el knowing at the outset that her next documentary was going to look at love and how much we reveal to others, and to ourselves. when in the thick of it. It's been a daunting process both emotionally - Har'el experienced the ending of her marriage as the project began - and physically, with the director breaking her back while on a research trip for the film and needing to wear a back brace for six months.

For the most part, as with Bombay Beach, Har'el found her subjects for LoveTrue by "getting lost and finding people." She knew she wanted to follow stories in distinctly different environments, and settled on Alaska. New York and Hawaii. While in Alaska, she and her team embarked on a bit of a casting process by posting notes throughout the town with contact details and information about the subject matter. Still, the method of finding the subjects in the other locales was, for her, typically intuitive.

"In Hawaii we went from island to island in four weeks and couldn't find anybody, and so I took a day off and went to the beach and saw Will [one of the film's main characters] there hanging out with a few of his friends," she recalls. "So I came up to him and talked to him and he wouldn't talk to me at first. He kind of told me to f\*\*\* off. And then a friend of his Googled me and told him, 'Hey, this girl is for real. You should text her.'" Without revealing too much about the film or

its subjects, it's sufficient to say that each story depicts people coming to terms with truths about their relationships and themselves through what most view as "traditional" doc-making - pointing a camera at a situation and shooting - and also through other, perhaps more revealing, processes.

In LoveTrue, Har'el has non-actors perform as older and younger versions of the characters, who interact with them through "psychodramas" and improvised scenarios designed to give the subjects an opportunity to come face to face with aspects of themselves, as gleaned through their own words.

There may be those who will take issue with blending therapy techniques and improvisation with observational documentary, but Har'el says: "I don't find that the form is so important when I approach something – what's most important is what you're trying to explore, and finding the most creative and interesting way to do so.

"To me, one of the more appalling things is to make a documentary about a person and say, 'We are going to make the person feel so comfortable that they forget the camera is there, and we are going to steal from them some private moments that otherwise they never would have wanted us to have," she adds. "That idea, to me, is a lot more shocking than the way I work, where we're going to make the person so consciously aware that we're making a film, that they're going to never forget that they made it, or the stories they tell themselves about themselves. And maybe it will give them clarity about who they are."

BY MANORI RAVINDRAN



Digital agency Secret Location has already made its mark in interactive web production. It's now making big moves into VR.

he 2014 Ebola outbreak, which has claimed 10,842 lives to date, is one of the worst and most misunderstood epidemics in human history. At first underreported by media and then, apparently,

overblown in terms of it being an immediate global threat, many were confused and misinformed about the realities of the on-the-ground situation across West Africa.

Now, imagine if there was an opportunity to better understand the origins and extent of such an epidemic, and get a sense of the context and conditions, without actually being there.

It's a vision that is being realized by Toronto-based digital agency Secret Location, which teamed with PBS doc strand 'Frontline' for the latter's first virtual reality (VR) project and sent a 360-degree 3D camera to Sierra Leone with the goal of shooting in the same location where "patient zero" was first identified, as well as at an Ebola treatment center and the capital Freetown, where numerous riots occurred.

Milward

"We're able to put people in those places, in a 360-degree 3D video where they would probably never get a chance – or want to get a chance – to go and experience first-hand what it's like to be in the middle of an Ebola outbreak and talk to the people who are witnesses to it," explains James Milward, founder and EP at Secret Location.



Secret Location teamed with PBS 'Frontline' to create the strand's virtual reality Ebola project.

The VR project with 'Frontline' – set to launch this summer – is just one of several irons in the fire for Secret Location, which creates interactive digital experiences for myriad brands, ranging from video and game sites for Insight Productions' Amazing

Race Canada to an interactive documentary for 'Frontline,' Targeting the Electorate. In May 2014, Entertainment One made an equity investment in Secret Location, allowing the company to open an LA outpost in December.

"We have so many projects within the U.S. that it came time for us to set up shop and have boots on the ground so we can ultimately make sure that everyone's getting the kind

of client service and relationship management we're able to do in Canada," says Milward.

A major commission also came in 2014 when Secret Location was tasked with creating a VR experience for Fox's scripted drama *Sleepy Hollow*. Combining Oculus Rift VR technology with a 3D shoot and CGI graphics, the live exhibition was unveiled at Comic Con San Diego and was a great success for the company.

This past January saw a big boost for Secret Location after it was hand-picked by music director Chris Milk to collaborate with his company VRSE.works on VR projects for commercial audiences.

Milward explains he's known Milk for a long time, and that the companies are part of "a small group

of people doing VR at a high level." When Milk set up the VR shingle, VRSE.works began talks with Secret Location about joining forces.

Secret Location is currently developing two projects with VRSE, with one – an unscripted VR pilot for a major U.S. broadcaster – in production in Alaska. The company is shooting the project with a VRSE camera, and hopes to demo in late summer. Other projects in development are at early stages, but will roll out later this year or in early 2016.

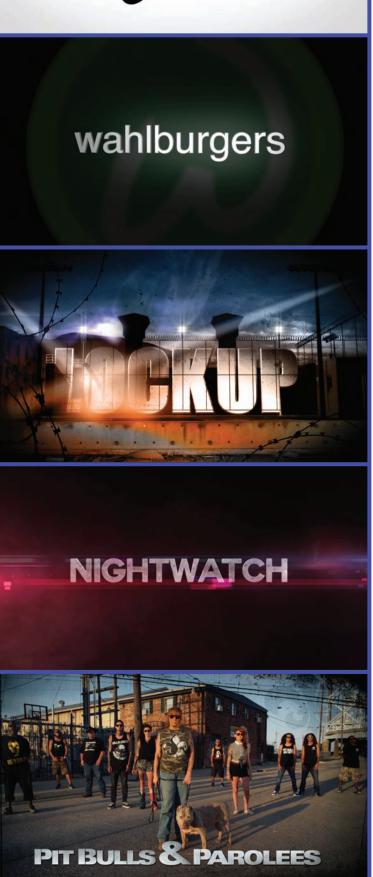
When asked what might revolutionize the non-fiction space, Milward identifies broadcast journalism as an area with significant potential.

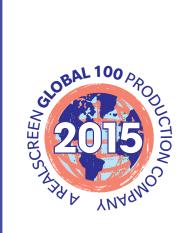
Pointing to Vice News' VR broadcast of New York City's "Millions March" protest, which premiered on the VRSE app in January, Milward says broadcast news could be reinvigorated through the use of VR.

"It's one thing to watch a news broadcast, it's another to be placed in situ in a foreign location and actually understand, or be in the middle of an interview between two world powers," says Milward, adding that Secret Location's Ebola project with 'Frontline' is part of a journalismoriented focus.

"When you put someone in a foreign location or a place they would never get an opportunity to be in, with people they'd never get the opportunity to be in the same space with, it contextualizes news stories in a way that's pretty amazing," he says.







# THANKS TO THE ENTIRE 44 BLUE TEAM AND ALL OF OUR CLIENTS, PARTNERS AND FRIENDS!



Glu Mobile has brought such reality celebs as Kim Kardashian, and Kendall and Kylie Jenner into the social gaming sphere, and business is booming.



Glu Mobile's
Kim Kardashian:
Hollywood game
was expected to
make as much as
\$100 million by
the end of April.

# **GAMEOFPHONES**

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

im Kardashian is a constant fixture in supermarket tabloids but she has also become an increasing presence in the business press thanks to one particularly lucrative deal.

The 34-year-old *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* star's mobile game *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood* earned more than US\$74 million in 2014, and was expected to clear the \$100 million mark in revenues by the end of April, 2015.

The success of the game, which has been downloaded more than 33 million times, has propelled its developer Glu Mobile to better-than-expected profits for eight consecutive quarters.

Similar games based on Kardashian's stepsisters Kendall and Kylie Jenner and pop stars Britney Spears and Katy Perry are in development. In April, Chinese online gaming and social media giant Tencent – arguably the largest gaming company in the world – bought a 14.6% stake in Glu for \$126 million.

Kardashian has more than 29 million Twitter followers and 27 million on Instagram. Execs at Glu not only saw a brand they liked, but an underserved and inherently social audience.

"Her fan base is forward-thinking, aspirational and technology-savvy; however, they aren't typically identified as 'gamers,'" Glu Mobile chairman and CEO Niccolo de Masi tells realscreen. "Partnering with Kim allowed us to reach a largely untapped audience."

In March, Glu signed a five-year contract to produce a game with Kylie and Kendall that will tap into their combined 72 million social followers, bringing Glu's potential audience for its celebrity-centric games to 300 million. (The game will be available for Android and iOS devices later in the year.)

For producers and networks with big reality talent, the Kardashian deal can be instructive in

expanding and capitalizing upon a similarly untapped audience to create a new and potentially huge stream of ancillary revenue.

Although her brand and celebrity profile were each essential to the deal, her ongoing involvement is key to its continued success.

"Aside from Glu's licensed IP titles like RoboCop and Hercules, there's not a partner we work with as

closely as we work with Kim," says de Masi. "We recognize that the game's success hinges in part on her deep involvement in its look and feel."

In the game, Kardashian mentors players to work their way up the Hollywood food chain to become an A-list celeb.

To keep it fresh – and make money – Glu has developed a content "roadmap" to add new events, quests, locations, clothing items, accessories and other in-game items. Developers have also added *Keeping Up* cast members Khloe Kardashian, Kourtney Kardashian, Kris Jenner, and the Jenner sisters, as well as former *Vogue* editor Andre Leon Talley.

The game itself is free but users must purchase "energy" or "stamina" to keep going. The

aforementioned items and upgrades also cost money and these "micro-transactions" account for around 85% of the game's revenue. The remaining 10-15% comes from advertising.

If Kardashian buys a new outfit or plans a

vacation in real life, she gives Glu a heads-up so changes can be made in real-time to match activity on her social feeds.

She stays in weekly contact with de Masi and developers via phone, emails and an open chat dialogue in addition to visiting their San Francisco office a few times each quarter to record new video and audio and brainstorm ideas.

In other words, the game's success goes beyond licensing and into the realm

of full-on social media marketing.

"I try to tell them as far in advance of when I

know I have a trip planned, and we try to get as many life-like things that I'm actually doing to really happen in the game so you can play along with my real life," the star told Adweek in March.

"I must have pulled thousands of references of all the different ways that characters should have their hair, the outfits and the shoes," she added. "One time there was a strap wrong on one of the character's shoes – her feet weren't matching. I had to change the programming to fix that. It was important to me that everything is right." •



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# CROSSING THE POND WITH LOVE IT OR LIST IT

BY MANORI RAVINDRAN

Big Coat
Productions'
property format
has been a huge
hit in North
America, and
now it's taking
on the UK.

hen Canadian property format Love It or List It crossed the pond to the UK in April, there was one important consideration to be made: would British audiences know what it meant to "list it"?

After all, most Brits aren't privy to North American real estate parlance, and according to Andrew Jackson – co-creative director of Glasgow-headquartered Raise the Roof Productions, which is producing the British version for broadcaster Channel 4 – the phrase isn't obviously property-related.

Love It or List It - which was originally commissioned by Canada's W Network in 2008 and is produced by Toronto-based Big Coat Productions – sees interior designer Hilary Farr and real estate agent David Visentin convince homeowners to either "love" their home and renovate it, or "list" it for sale and purchase another. A spin-off series titled Love It or List It, Too was also sold to U.S. net HGTV, and the program is now one of the first Canadian

lifestyle formats to travel overseas.

"I think it makes sense when you hear it and understand it, but to begin with, 'list it' doesn't instantly mean 'sell,'" Jackson tells *realscreen*. "We would say 'do up' or 'sell up.' That would be a more natural way of selling it."

> Hilary Farr (left) and David Visentin (right) star in the North American version of Love It or List It.

It's for this reason the Channel 4 program is titled *Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It*, with a focus on UK property experts Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer, who became household names in the territory for their long-running Channel 4 series *Location Location Location*, and in 2010, founded Raise the Roof Productions.

When the broadcaster optioned the format from Beyond Distribution last year, Raise the Roof pitched the idea of Allsopp and Spencer hosting the series and won the contract. As such, unlike the North American format, the inclusion of "Kirstie and Phil" in the UK title garners a brand recognition that helps British audiences understand the gist of the program.

According to Beyond International, the UK version premiered to more than 2.2 million viewers, up 56% for the 8 p.m. time slot.

One of the UK program's biggest advocates is Big Coat Productions executive producer Maria Armstrong, who consulted with Raise the Roof on the making of the British version. The exec says the indie has followed the format "to a T," and agrees it makes sense to highlight Allsopp and Spencer.

"They have an enormous following in England and to see them and their relationship is basically what we've built with Hilary and David, though theirs was already built," she says, adding that negotiations are currently underway to take *Love It or List It* to a couple of other countries.

"It makes sense to make them the emphasis," says Armstrong. "That's why the show is successful: it's a great format with a decision to be made, and featuring two hosts you want to see."

On the six-episode series, which debuted in the UK on April 28, Allsopp oversees the redesigns of homes, while Spencer presents homeowners with new properties to choose from. But while having distinct roles for the presenters is very much in line with the Canadian format, a number of small but necessary changes also needed to be made.

Jackson says the Channel 4 show sees initial talks between presenters and homeowners take place at their homes instead of cafés or bars, such as in the North American series, and a production vehicle was also added to the mix.

"Because we're traveling up and down the

### **FORMAT FOCUS**



The UK version of the format features popular UK property experts Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer.

country, we've got a car," says the exec, who joined Raise the Roof in 2012 from Channel 4, where he served as deputy head of features. "We've got our own production vehicle that we rig with GoPros. We tend to rig the car up and they have a chat on the way and they kind of work out how things are going.

"But in terms of the format, we do the house tour with the realtor and designer, we do the chat with the contributors, we do the build, we do the house searches," says Jackson. "And then we do the big 'love it or list it' question at the end."

The exec says property shows in the UK have traditionally fared well, with most major networks having their own property series in the mid-2000s. However, an extended slump in the British housing market saw the popularity of such programming waning, and it wasn't until a rise in the market over the past year that there has been renewed interest in the genre.

As for what Jackson finds most appealing about the series, he says it's the straight-forward nature of the ultimate 'love it or list it' question and the simplicity of the format that resonates.

"I just love the ending. I love that kind of question, and asking them quite dramatically if you're going to love it or list it – it's a killer question," says Jackson. "So it's the simplicity. Your house doesn't work, and one wants to move, one wants to stay. It's a proper dilemma and by the end of the show you've got a proper decision."

# **KESHET, ITVBE ASK WHEN DO YOU GET OFF?**

British lifestyle network ITVBe has ordered a series based on the Keshet Productions UK dating format *When Do You Get Off?* 

The London-based arm of the Israeli producer/distributor is in pre-production on the 10 x one-hour series, which focuses on a single person who dates four people at their places of work.

The format was developed and created by Keshet UK and is being exec produced by head of UK formats Kevin Mundye and head of development Simon Shalgosky. In the series, one person spends two days dating four people at their workplaces and then must pick the one they like best to meet up with when they get off work.

"Despite the old saying, 'You should work to live, not live to work,' the fact is most people are defined by the job they do and spend more time at work than anywhere else," producers said in a statement. "So, what better way to find out who someone really is, or show someone who you really are, than to invite them in to the workplace?"

ITVBe will air *When Do You Get Off?* later this year. **Kevin Ritchie** 

# BBC WORLDWIDE TAKES A STAKE IN MIGHTY

BBC Worldwide is supporting the launch of a UK indie titled Mighty Productions, helmed by former CPL Productions exec Lynn Sutcliffe and format creator Hugh Rycroft.

The commercial arm of the UK pubcaster has taken a 25% stake in the company, which aims to develop formats for global broadcasters. BBC Worldwide will also have



Mighty Productions' principals are Hugh Rycroft (left) and Lynn Sutcliffe (right).

global distribution rights to all Mighty Productions output over a five-year window.

In the venture, Sutcliffe will serve as MD while Rycroft is to be creative director. The pair has collaborated on such projects as ITV quiz format *Tipping Point*, which they worked on during Sutcliffe's former position as head of development at RDF Television. The company is currently developing a number of projects, include daytime quiz formats and shiny-floor programs.

Prior to launching the indie, Sutcliffe served as director of development at CPL Productions, where her credits include the 25-part series *Decimate* (BBC1), *Married at First Sight* (C4), *The Day the Cash Came* (BBC1) and *Who Repairs Wins* (UKTV). The exec began her TV career at the BBC where she worked on the development team for such programs as *The Weakest Link*, *Friends Like These*, *Dog Eat Dog and Strictly Come Dancing*.

Prior to CPL, Sutcliffe's post at RDF Television saw her develop and oversee shows including Don't Forget the Lyrics (Sky), The Truth About Size Zero (ITV), How The Other Half Live (C4) and Sing If You Can (ITV).

Meanwhile, Rycroft got his start writing radio comedy, and later entered TV format creation. His credits include *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (BBC2), *The Sack Race* (BBC2/CBS), and celebrity quiz show *School's Out* (BBC1). In 2012, he created *Tipping Point* with RDF Television and his latest daytime show *Decimate* launched this past April. **MR** 



# Stephen David ENTERTAINMENT

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Lion Television joined an expedition to find a famous shipwreck – a discovery that had eluded five previous expeditions. Here, Lion managing director **Richard Bradley** describes the thrill, and the potential folly, in looking for Franklin's Lost Ships.

# **WITH RISK**

t is always a challenge for broadcasters to describe the ideas they are looking for. Understandably they often fall back on adjectives: big, fresh, appointment-to-view – as if anyone wanted to make small, stale and take-it-or-leave-it TV. But another word that often comes up is "risky." It has a frisson – in risk lies possibility. But is that really what they want?

Risk involves possible failure. And failure in television is very expensive and very public. That's one reason formats became so irresistible: guaranteed outcomes, guaranteed – if often manufactured – drama. Over years of production, I've learned that when broadcasters say this, what they really mean is the appearance of risk but with the guarantee of success. Occasionally, we see real, jaw-dropping risk – Nick Wallenda walking blindfolded between skyscrapers, the world record space jump, crashing a plane in the desert. I take my hat off to everyone involved for their collective cojones but it is very rare.

When our development team discovered last summer that the biggest search to date for the lost ships of Sir John Franklin was about to set off, we had some serious risk assessment to do. We could get on board but we would need to decide immediately. Were we in or out? Aficionados of maritime mysteries (and most Canadians) will need no introduction to the story – two state-of-theart ships set sail to the Arctic in 1845 with 129 men on board under Captain Franklin, in search of the Northwest Passage and never to return. It is a mystery with everything – enigmatic grave stones, frozen exhumed bodies, rumors of lead poisoning and madness, evidence of cannibalism – but in 170 years, no sign of the ships.

Could an Arctic expedition with a television production company embedded within succeed in finding a shipwreck when five others failed?

Five previous expeditions had yielded almost nothing, so this was pretty high on the Richter risk scale. On the other hand, this foray was part of the sixth year of a massive multi-agency search led by the Canadian government, Parks Canada, and the Canadian Royal Geographical Society involving ice-breakers, helicopters, state-of-the-art underwater subs scanning every inch of the sea floor – if anyone might succeed it was this team. They had the knowledge, the kit and the motivation. So were we in or out?

Even a trimmed down team would take us into the tens of thousands of pounds. In the end, the tale was so strong and iconic – and the Arctic expedition sounded so thrilling – we decided to gamble.

We moved to have our ace PD Ben Finney and cameraman Liam Ayres embedded on an ice-breaker moving through the Arctic ice and fog, while in London we sat by our phones and computers and waited. Bar a polar bear sighting and the rescue of a small sailing vessel dangerously adrift, there was little to report. The ice was perilous and when it was safe to get the sub in the water the scans were revealing nothing. Day after day of waiting became weeks. Costs were mounting.

And then it came, a day or two after the scheduled end of the expedition – an enigmatic email saying: "It looks like there is some good news." And then another shortly after that, promising very good news indeed.

Amid great secrecy, we gleaned that the search team had first found a large piece of metal from a ship's crane and shortly afterward, in just 11 meters of water, they'd found the astonishingly well-preserved wreck of Franklin's flagship, HMS Erebus.

In a flurry of excitement, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced the find. The news flashed around the world. And the next day, the phone rang off the hook with broadcasters who'd heard about the find, and then discovered Lion TV were the only team on board. What a pleasant change to have the broadcasters pursuing us! Very soon we had a fantastic international line-up of broadcasters – C4, PBS 'Nova,' CBC and Radio Canada – with All3Media International picking up the rest of the world.

So what have we learned from this? Well, it's not going to turn us overnight into hardcore gamblers. The stakes are too high and the costs too great. But sometimes, if it feels right and the consequences of failure won't bring the bailiffs around, it's worth taking a flutter. You never know – you might dig up a king in a car park, or find a ship under the ice....

Franklin's Lost Ships is a copro with 90th Parallel Productions, Channel 4, CBC, Radio Canada, PBS 'Nova' and All3Media International.



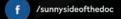
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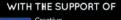






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# **OPENING THE DOOR**

est known for his work in gritty crime dramas including the BBC's Luther and HBO's The Wire as well as a breakthrough turn as South African leader Nelson Mandela in Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom, British actor Idris Elba is accustomed to playing formidable men. But things became a little more personal when a documentary following Elba as he recorded an album of South African music honoring Mandela was punctuated by the sudden death of his father Winston. Mandela, My Dad and Me – the resulting film, directed by Daniel Vernon and a copro between Elba's prodco Green Door Pictures, Shine North and Woodcut Media – isn't the documentary the team set out to make, but has become the actor's most intimate undertaking to date.

"I found myself grieving, I found myself in therapy, and I found myself fragile in moments, and the cameras were rolling the whole time," Elba tells realscreen. Following its premiere at London's British Film Institute in April, the film was picked up by Discovery Networks for the UK and Ireland. Looking ahead, Elba – who recently put the kibosh on those pesky James Bond rumors – says he plans to focus on scripted and unscripted work with Green Door, including a film on a "high-profile soccer player," and eke out another album. "I use 15 to 18 hours of my day," he shrugs. "I don't sleep as well as I should but you'd be surprised how much your brain can do."

### How was the BFI premiere?

I had 25 members of my personal family who were all there. My dad was a centerpiece of our family so it was quite an emotional night. We didn't set out to make this film the way it's come out – it's quite a personal film. We were really meant to make a film about making music in South Africa.

### In terms of vulnerability on screen, how did this process differ to your narrative work?

To a certain degree, you can control in a narrative how you look, what you say and what you sound like. The opening shot of this film is me waking up with my sunglasses on, akimbo in the bed. That's not nice, but it really does set the tone for what you're about to see. It's a warts-and-all type of documentary-making.

### What's the plan for Green Door Pictures?

It's been going for two years, but essentially it was out of my laptop with my agent. Now, we've got a small team and an office in London and we're really starting to cultivate good stuff. It's a process and it's hard work. It's not always rewarding. For me, documentaries are like books: people pick a book based on their own personal interests. You can put the cover on it and make it look good and attractive, but it has to have content.

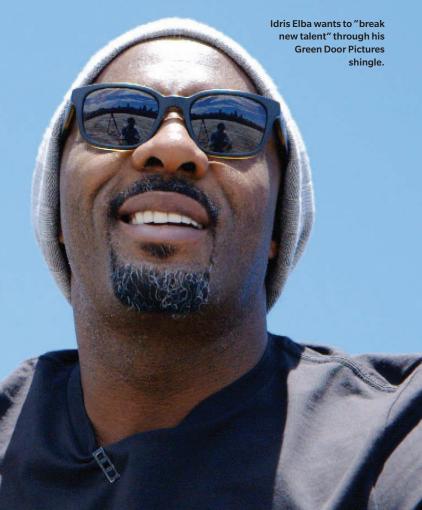
### BY MANORI RAVINDRAN

### What balance do you hope to strike between Green Door and your acting?

Green Door's goal is, for factual television, to break the ice on things people don't know about. Then there's the film and television department – television being my real focus at the moment since I've come from that industry for about 25 years, and I'm loving independent film. My goal over the next five to 10 years is to really set a platform for those sorts of filmmakers, have Green Door break new talent and have people go, "That's a Green Door [film]." How'd you know that? "Because I've never heard of that filmmaker before and it's amazing."

### What's next for your music?

I'm taking my character in *Luther* as the centerpiece for an album and I'm trying to do a spin and say, "Can we make the songs about what the character feels like, who he is?" The album is called *Murder Loves John* – it's a working title for now.



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